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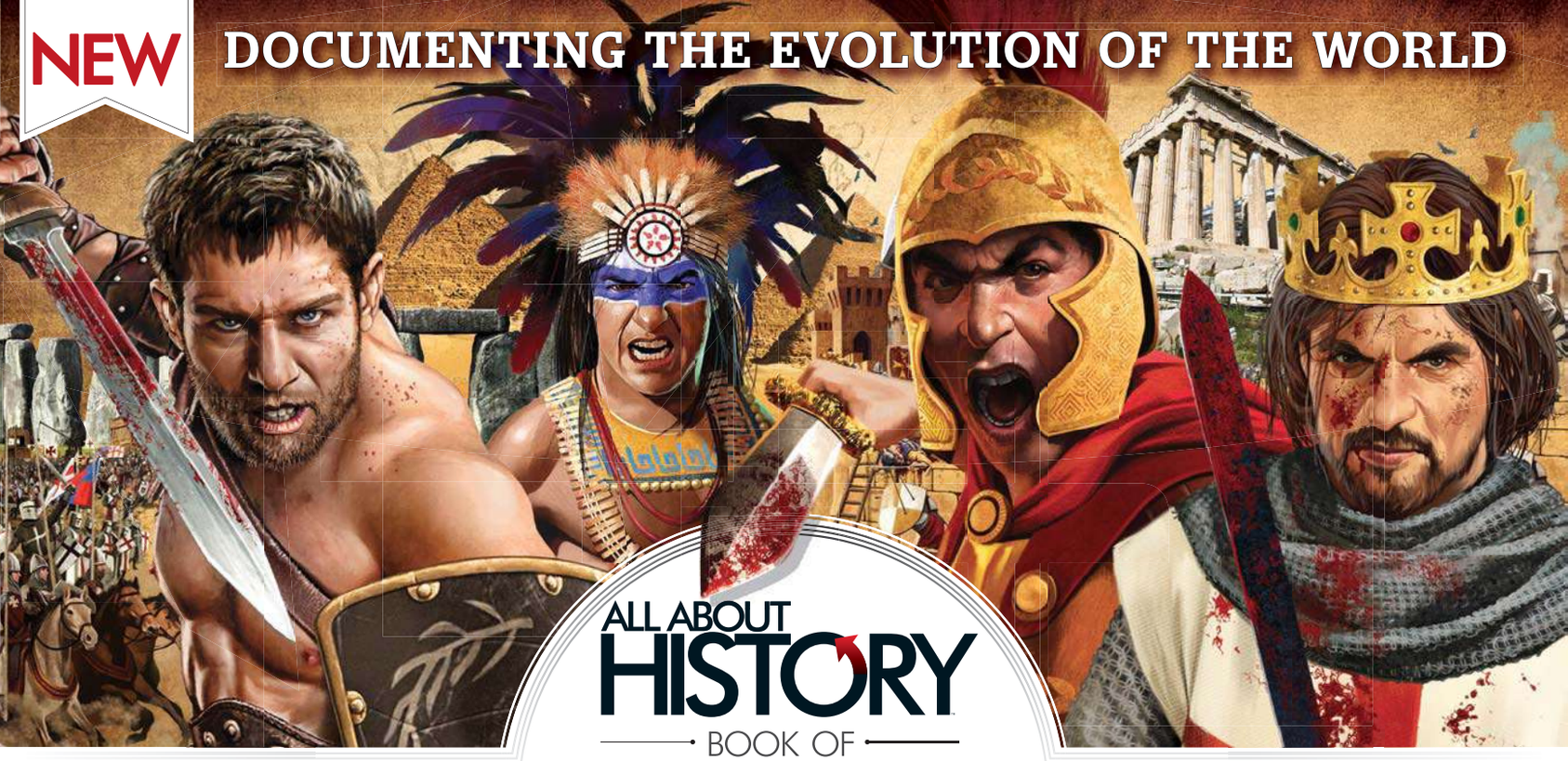

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

BOOK OF

HISTORY YEAR BY YEAR

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Understanding the events that have come before us and how they have shaped the world we live in is a fascinating subject. So often, we focus on specific dates such as 1066, 1215, 1914 and 1945, but there's so much more – going back so much further – that should be recognised. In Volume 1 of this book, we take you from ancient civilisations to medieval times, covering the origins of humanity and ancient Egypt to the rise of the Roman empire and the emergence of the Vikings. Displayed in an illustrative timeline and packed with incredible details, facts and images, this is the ideal learning tool for people of all ages, taking you on an exciting journey through the history of the world.

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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IMAGINE PUBLISHING

1

8MYA–3000BCE

008 **HUMAN ORIGINS**

Features

012 Colonizing the Planet

018 Prehistoric Peoples

2

3000–700BCE

020 **EARLY CIVILIZATIONS**

Features

026 The Story of Writing

030 Ancient Empires

036 Ancient Egypt

3

700BCE–599CE

040 **THE CLASSICAL AGE**

Features

046 Ancient Greece

052 The Story of Metalworking

062 The Story of Money

072 The Rise of the Roman Empire

082 Ancient Rome

094 Classical Trade

4

600–1449

104 **TRADE & INVENTION**

Features

120 The Vikings

132 The Islamic World

142 The Aztecs, Incas, and Maya

152 The Story of Printing

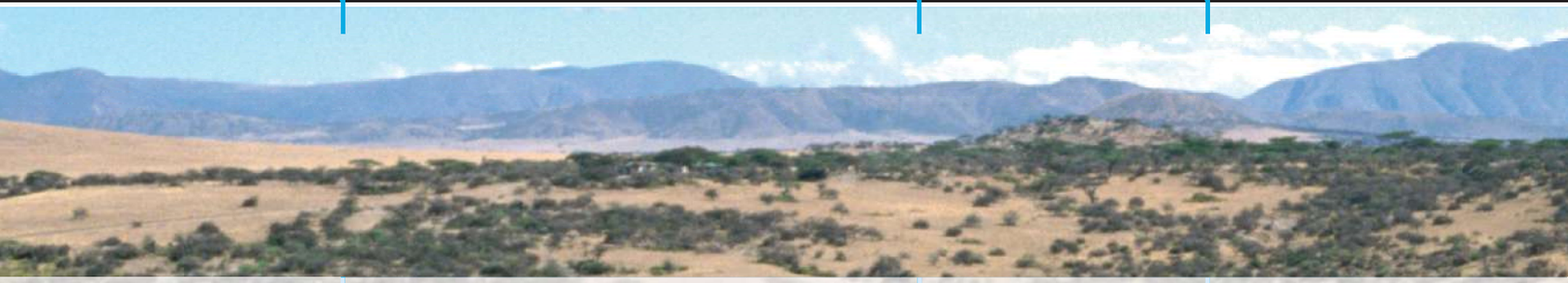
CONTENTS

1

HUMAN ORIGINS

8 MYA–3000 BCE

Our earliest ancestors lived in Africa almost eight million years ago. Over seven million years later, we appeared and developed the skills – including sophisticated tool-making and agriculture – that allowed us to colonize the world.



Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania is a site of great archaeological significance and it is sometimes referred to as the "Cradle of Mankind". At least two species of early hominin are associated with this area.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMAN AND OTHER APES DNA and blood proteins suggest that our lineage separated from that of the chimpanzees between 8 and 6 million years ago (MYA). Only a few fossil specimens date to this time: ***Sahelanthropus tchadensis*** (7–6 MYA), ***Orrorin tugenensis*** (6.1–5 MYA), and two species of ***Ardipithecus***, *kadabba* (5.8–5.2 MYA) and *ramidus* (4.4 MYA). While all of these species seem to have **walked on two legs** like us, it is not certain whether any were actual ancestors of humans. Because species are **constantly evolving**, and individuals of those species can vary, it is difficult to tell from isolated and often poorly preserved fossils which species they should be assigned to, or how these are related to one another. However, these fossils do tell us a great deal about what the **last common ancestor** we shared with chimpanzees was like.

7 MYA
THE TIME WHEN **THE FIRST** HUMAN **ANCESTOR** APPEARS

SEVERAL DIFFERENT AUSTRALOPITHECINE species lived in Africa between 4.2 and 2 MYA. Although they walked on two legs most of the time, they were rather **small and ape-like** and still lived partially in trees. Their brains were about the size of those of modern chimpanzees, but some australopithecines seem to have **used tools**. The earliest stone tools come from Ethiopia and date to **2.6 MYA**, but bones with cut marks made by stone tools have been found associated with ***Australopithecus afarensis*** nearby, and date to 3.4 MYA. The australopithecines' descendants followed two distinct modes of life: members of the genus ***Paranthropus*** had huge jaws and big teeth for eating tough vegetable foods; meanwhile, ***Homo rudolfensis*** and ***H. habilis*** seem to have eaten **more protein**, using tools to get at the protein-rich marrow inside long-bones by scavenging from carnivore kills.

Lucy
This unusually complete skeleton of Australopithecus afarensis, *discovered in Kenya in 1974, was named after the Beatles' song "Lucy in the sky with diamonds".*

ULTIMATELY, THE PARANTHROPINES' WAY OF LIFE was unsuccessful and they became **extinct** after about **1.2 MYA**, while their cousins *Homo habilis* and *H. rudolfensis* survived. These early *Homo* species were not very different from australopithecines.

It was with ***Homo ergaster*** (1.8 MYA) that our ancestors started to **look much more familiar**. *H. ergaster* was tall and slender, and may have been the first hominin (a term used to describe humans and their ancestors) without much body hair. Their **brains were larger** than those of their ancestors, and they lost the last of their adaptations to tree-climbing to become fully adapted to walking and running.

TOOLS

Many animal species use natural objects as tools, but the manufacture of stone tools is unique to hominins. The earliest are simply sharp flakes broken off stone cobbles by striking them with a "hammerstone". These are known as "Oldowan" tools, after Olduvai Gorge where they were first found. Later tools, such as Acheulean handaxes, required more skill. Our manufacture of tools might be one explanation for the evolution of the human brain.

NOT LONG AFTER THE APPEARANCE of *Homo ergaster*, hominins expanded their range **beyond Africa** for the first time. A species called ***H. georgicus*** appeared in Dmanisi in Georgia by **1.7 MYA**. Another close relative of *Homo ergaster*, ***Homo erectus***, lived in China and Indonesia perhaps not long afterward. Some archaeologists believe that earlier groups of hominins may also have left Africa, as some of the skulls from Dmanisi and from the much later site of Liang Bua in Flores in Indonesia (currently known as ***Homo floresiensis***) resemble those of *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis*.

Living further north would have required a **different way of life**

7 MYA Hominin and chimpanzee **lineages diverge**

7–6 MYA *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* may **pre-date** hominin/chimpanzee **split**, but is thought to walk upright

5.7–5.2 MYA *Ardipithecus kadabba*, possibly only a variant of *A. ramidus*

4.4 MYA *Ardipithecus ramidus* ("Ardi") is **chimpanzee-like**, but definitely walks upright

4.1–2 MYA *Australopithecus afarensis* has a brain not much larger than that of modern chimpanzees; still habitually climbs trees

3.5–2 MYA *Australopithecus africanus*, the **first early hominin** to be identified

3.6 MYA Hominin footprints **preserved in volcanic ash** at Laetoli in Tanzania

3.3 MYA Earliest **cut marks** produced by stone tools on **bones** at Dikika, Ethiopia

3.18 MYA "Lucy", *Australopithecus afarensis*, alive; 13 males and females of varying ages form **"first family"** group of *A. afarensis* fossils

2.6 MYA Earliest known **stone tools** from Gona, Ethiopia

2.5–1.2 MYA "Nutcracker man", *Paranthropus boisei*, has huge grinding teeth and **powerful jaws**

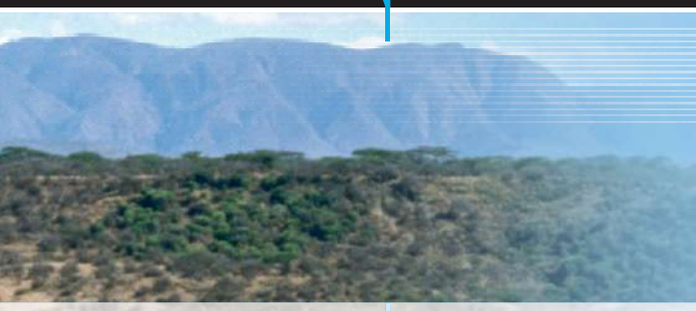
2–1 MYA *Paranthropus robustus*, first **paranthropine** to be **discovered**

1.9–1.6 MYA *Homo habilis* ("**handyman**") is associated with stone tools and cut-marked bones

1.8 MYA *Homo ergaster* is much taller and more slender than its ancestors

1.7 MYA Earliest known hominin **fossils** from **Eurasia** (*Homo georgicus*), from Dmanisi in Georgia

1.65 MYA Acheulean **handaxes** appear – they may mark a significant step forward in **human intelligence**



> ALL LIVING HUMANS **DESCENDED FROM COMMON ANCESTORS** WHO LIVED IN AFRICA LESS THAN 200,000 YEARS AGO.

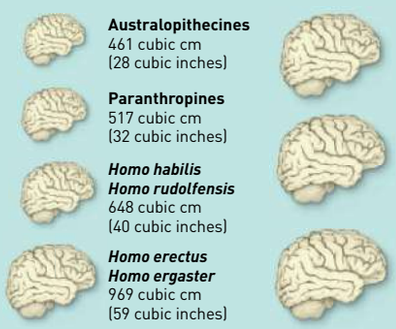
Stephen Jay Gould, American palaeontologist, from *I have Landed: the end of a beginning in natural history*, 2002

Hominins beyond Africa
Our earliest ancestors evolved in Africa. Possible dispersal routes from Africa are shown on this map, with dates referring to the earliest fossils known from each region.

to life in the African savanna. The climate was cooler and environments were more seasonal, with significant variation in food resources over the course of a year. Fewer edible plants meant that hominins would have had to rely more on harder-to-find and fiercely competed-for **animal protein** for food. They needed to move over greater distances and **work together** to share resources and information to **survive** in these regions.

ACHEULEAN HANDAXES made by *Homo ergaster* and *H. erectus* were produced across most of Africa and Eurasia, and demonstrate the ability to learn **complex skills** from one another and pass them down over generations. To make these tools, knappers had to think several steps ahead in order to select a suitable stone and to prepare and place each strike. Handaxes were used for a wide range of activities, including butchery, but they might also have been important for **personal or group identity**, demonstrating their makers' strength and skill.

While Homo Erectus continued to thrive in Asia, ***Homo antecessor*** had appeared as far west as northern Spain and Italy by 1.2 MYA. Marks on their bones at the site of **Atapuerca** in Spain suggest they practised **cannibalism**. However, these early colonists may not have thrived in these unfamiliar landscapes, as very few sites are known. By 600,000 years ago, a new hominin species, ***Homo heidelbergensis***, had spread much more widely across Europe. *H. heidelbergensis* seem to have been good hunters, or at least proficient scavengers.



HOMININ BRAIN SIZES

Humans have a disproportionately large brain for a primate of their size, but archaeologists disagree about how and why this expansion happened. Switching to fatty and calorific foods such as bone marrow and meat may have "powered" brain growth, and also demanded more complex tools and effective hunting and foraging skills. Social skills were also a part of this process, as increasing group co-operation and pair-bonding were necessary to sustain the longer periods of childhood that infants needed for their larger brains to develop.

Burying the dead
Neanderthals often disposed of their dead with care. Some were buried in graves, as here at Kebara Cave in Israel, which dates to 60,000 BCE.

BY AROUND 350,000 YEARS AGO, while *Homo erectus* continued to hold sway over eastern Asia, *Homo heidelbergensis* in Europe and Western Asia had evolved into ***Homo neanderthalensis***.

Neanderthals were **stockier and stronger** than modern humans, and their brains were as large or even larger, although shaped slightly differently. Neanderthals were almost certainly very accomplished hunters. They were also **highly skilled** at making stone tools and heavy thrusting spears with which they tackled even large and dangerous animal prey, such as horses and bison.

However, despite burying their dead – which may have indicated ceremonial practices or belief in an afterlife – Neanderthals do not seem to have created more than the most **limited art** or used any symbols, as all modern humans do. Whether or not they spoke in a similar way to modern humans is also difficult to establish. Although their throat and voice box anatomy suggests that a **Neanderthal language** may have been limited compared to that of humans, they must have communicated in some fashion, perhaps by combining a **less complex** form of vocalization with expressive miming.

200,000
THE NUMBER OF YEARS THE **NEANDERTHAL DOMINATED** EUROPE AND WESTERN ASIA

1.65–1 MYA Finds of *Homo erectus* from Java dated to as early as 1.5 mya, but more likely to date from around 1 mya

1.6 MYA Earliest known **artefacts** in China thought to have been made by *Homo erectus* although fossils from region currently date to only 0.8 mya

1.5 MYA "Turkana boy" is an almost **complete skeleton** of an adolescent ***Homo ergaster*** from Tanzania

1.5–1.4 MYA Evidence of **fire** at sites in South Africa, but may be natural

1.2 MYA Appearance of **first Europeans** – *Homo antecessor*

0.79 MYA First reliable evidence for **control of fire** at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Israel

0.78 MYA Earth's **magnetic field** assumes current polarity

0.6 MYA *Homo heidelbergensis* now widespread

0.4 MYA Distinctive **Neanderthal anatomy** appears across Europe

0.4 MYA **Fire-hardened** wooden spears in use

0.3 MYA Evidence of prepared cores used to make **multiple-component tools**

0.3 MYA **Modern human** skeletal traits appear in African *Homo heidelbergensis*

0.28 MYA First evidence for use of **natural pigments**

0.28 MYA Incised pebble from Berekhat Ram, Israel could be **first art**

0.2 MYA Mitochrondial Eve is the **last common ancestor** of all humans

0.186–0.127 MYA Neanderthals engage in **communal hunting** and mass kills

0.16 MYA *Homo sapiens idaltu*, skull has some primitive features, but **shares distinctive characteristics** with modern humans

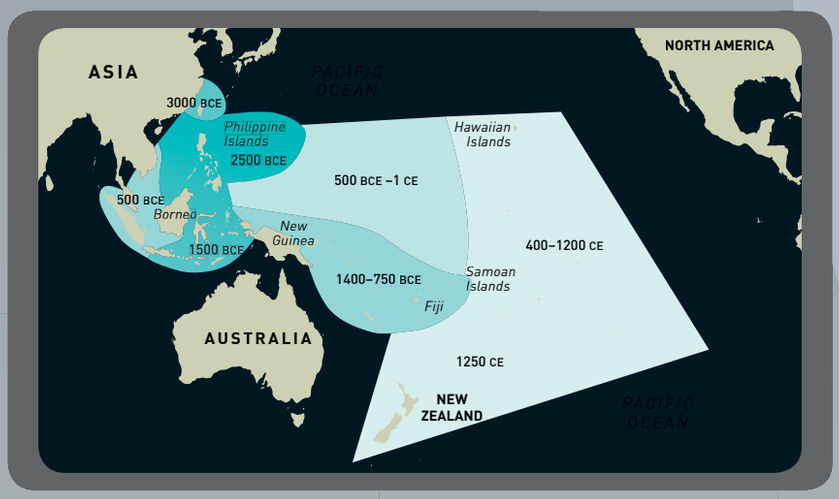
COLONIZING THE PLANET

THE SPREAD OF MODERN HUMANS ACROSS THE WORLD

Skeletal and DNA evidence suggests that our species, *Homo sapiens*, evolved in Africa and then spread across the globe. The first traces of modern humans beyond Africa come from fossils in Israel and possibly from stone tools found in Arabia. They date to before 100,000 years ago.

Homo sapiens' colonization of the globe involved many stops, starts, and sometimes retreats, as well as waves of different groups of people in some areas. *Homo sapiens* may have moved into Eurasia via the Mediterranean coast of western Asia, spreading into Western Europe by 35,000 years ago (YA). Archaeological evidence suggests that people may also have taken a "southern route" across Arabia into southern Asia. There may also have been movement eastward, perhaps much earlier, as stone tools have been found in India from 77,000 YA and Malaysia from 70,000 YA. Some possible *Homo sapiens* finds from southern China are dated to 68,000 YA (Liujiang), and even 100,000 YA (Zhirendong). However, these finds remain controversial, and most scholars favour later dates here. In Australia, widespread colonization probably did not occur until 45,000 YA, though some sites have been dated to as early as 60,000 YA.

Further north, *Homo sapiens* first spread across northern Eurasia around 35,000 YA. However, they may have retreated during the last Ice Age, and not re-colonized the region until after 14,000–13,000 YA. Genetically, the North American colonists are likely to have originated in East Asia. They probably travelled across the plain of "Beringia" – now beneath the Bering Straits between Siberia and Alaska, but exposed by low sea levels at the height of the last Ice Age. Distinctive "Clovis" spear points (flaked on both sides) are found across North America around 12,000 YA, so modern humans were widespread at that point, but earlier sites are also known, including South American sites such as Monte Verde (15,500–15,000 YA).



LATE ARRIVALS
The islands of Oceania were some of the last parts of the globe to be colonized, via the Philippines, by Austronesian-speaking early farmers from Taiwan. The more remote northern and eastern islands of Micronesia and Polynesia remained uninhabited until after 700 CE, and New Zealand was populated as late as 1250 CE.

Tracking language
The spread of languages can often be tracked to reflect the movement of people. This map shows the spread of Austronesian speakers across Oceania. Earlier settlers were already present in some western areas.

Going global
Skeletal and genetic evidence suggests that modern humans originated in Africa, and spread across the globe from there, as reflected on this map. This is called the "Out of Africa" theory. An alternative "multiregional" theory suggests that Homo sapiens *evolved simultaneously in many different parts of the world, from ancestors who had left Africa much earlier.*

Changing environments
The ancient ancestors of modern humans evolved in the African tropics. Over time, as human species evolved larger brains and developed more advanced skills and behaviour, they became better equipped to deal with the challenges of new environments.

These cave paintings from Lascaux in France date to around 17,000 years ago. Most cave paintings are from a similar period, though some were created by the earliest *Homo sapiens* to arrive in western Europe, around 32,000 years ago.

IN AFRICA, HOMININ FOSSILS gradually began to reveal the characteristic skeletal traits of *Homo sapiens* from around 400,000 YA: smaller brow ridges, higher and rounder skulls, and chins. DNA analysis of living humans suggests that the **common ancestors of all living humans** (known as Mitochondrial Eve) lived in Africa around 200,000 YA. An Ethiopian fossil skull from 160,000 YA is almost modern in shape; this has been identified as a subspecies of modern humans, *Homo sapiens idaltu*. Humans moved north into Western Asia some time before 100,000 YA, but they do not seem to have stayed there for long.

250,000 YEARS AGO WHEN **HOMO SAPIENS** FIRST APPEARED

It is debated whether uniquely human behaviours such as **language and the ability to use symbols** evolved before or after modern human anatomy. One theory is that such behaviours became vital only after 74,000 YA, when the massive eruption of **Mount Toba** in Indonesia triggered a global **"volcanic winter".** DNA analysis suggests that many human groups died out at this time and, in such harsh conditions, complex modern language and symbolism would have allowed groups to **exchange resources and information** with one another, which could have made the difference between survival and extinction. However, others argue that the impact of the eruption of Mount Toba has been exaggerated, and that achaeology in Africa suggests complex hunting practices and the development of symbolism even before this.

Prepared core and flake
Neanderthals and other hominins prepared a stone core before striking off a sharp flake to use. In Europe this technology is known as the "Mousterian".

It is not clear when **modern humans first spread into Eurasia**. Some researchers argue they left Arabia before 74,000 YA. Others say the major migration occurred later, 50,000 YA, and via western Asia, after developing a new form of stone-tool technology that involved producing long, thin flint "blades", which probably formed part of composite tools.

HUMANS SPREAD RAPIDLY across Europe and Asia. In **Europe**, modern humans appeared in Turkey from 40,000 YA, and in western Europe shortly afterwards. In Asia, fossils of *Homo sapiens* in **Indonesia** and **China** date to at least 42,000 YA, and the sea crossing to **Australia** occurred before 45,000 YA. These dates suggest that the earliest modern humans in Asia may have encountered groups of *Homo erectus*, who survived in China until at least 40,000 years ago. In Indonesia the picture was even more complicated. Fossils found on the **island of Flores** date to less than 38,000 years ago, and seem to represent specialized, extremely small forms of *Homo erectus,* or perhaps even the descendants of earlier hominins. More evidence comes from **Denisova Cave** in Russia – DNA analysis of bones found here reveals **genetic material** distinct from that of both modern humans and Neanderthals, dated to around 40,000 YA. It seems increasingly likely that several groups descended from hominins who left Africa before *Homo sapiens* may have **coexisted in Eurasia** at this time.

MODERN HUMANS AND NEANDERTHALS

Neanderthal skulls (right) were about the same size as anatomically modern human skulls (left), but they had lower, more sloping foreheads and a double arch of bone over their eyes that created heavy brow ridges. Their lower faces jutted out and they did not have chins. Overall, Neanderthal skeletons reveal that they were much more muscular than modern humans, as well as being extremely physically active and well-adapted to cold climates.

> "THE NEANDERTHALS **WERE NOT APE-MEN**… THEY WERE **AS HUMAN AS US**, BUT THEY REPRESENTED A **DIFFERENT BRAND OF HUMANITY.**"
>
> **Chris Stringer and Clive Gamble**, from *In Search of the Neanderthals*, 1993

IN EUROPE, MODERN HUMANS overlapped with Neanderthals, who survived until at least 30,000 years ago. How and why **Neanderthals died out** is one of the most intensely debated topics in archaeology. There is little evidence of violent interactions between the species, and comparison of DNA increasingly suggests that there may have been some exchange of **mating partners** between the groups.

Early humans may have **outcompeted** their relatives for **food and raw materials** in the rapidly changing environmental conditions. Environments at the time were highly unstable, so even a slight increase in competition could have been significant. However, populations were small and spread out, and co-existed for up to 10,000 years in Europe, and more than 30,000

130,000–115,000 YA Increasing use of fish and marine mammals at sites in South Africa

120,000 YA Earliest possible Neanderthal burial

110,000–90,000 YA Early *Homo sapiens* in Levant

75,000 YA Advanced "blade" technologies, shell beads, and incised ochre at Blombos Cave, South Africa

73,500 YA The eruption of Mt Toba in Sumatra causes global drop in temperature

46,000 YA Modern fossils of humans appear in southern Asia

45,000 YA Widespread colonization of Australia

45,000 YA *Homo sapiens* reach eastern Europe

40,000 YA Colonization of New Guinea

40,000 YA Late surviving *Homo erectus* in China

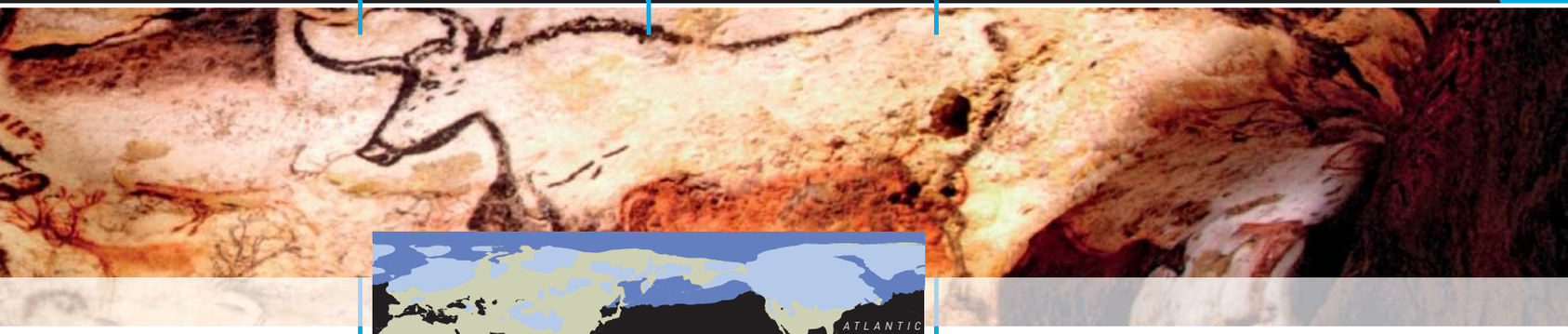
40,000 YA *Homo sapiens* in China

37,000 YA Campanian eruption in Italy; ash falls across much of Europe

36,000–28,000 YA In Europe, some technologies suggest Neanderthal and human interaction

35,000 YA Aurignacian technologies well-established across Europe, including characteristic stone tools and art

32,000 YA Earliest *Homo sapiens* in Japan



in Indonesia. Alternatively, the **exchange of resources and information** allowed by modern humans' language and symbol use, and their planned and flexible technologies made *Homo sapiens* better able to withstand climatic downturns than Neanderthals.

Others believe that these behaviours were not unique to modern humans. Hominins would have needed to **use rafts or boats** to reach the island of Flores in Indonesia by 800,000 YA . Some late Neanderthal sites also contain elements of technologies normally associated with *Homo sapiens*, although it is possible that Neanderthals may have copied, traded with, or even stolen from modern humans.

A combination of environmental unrest and increased competition is currently considered to be the most likely explanation for **Neanderthal extinction**.

KEY
- Neanderthal sites
- Modern human sites

Neanderthal and human ranges
Modern humans and Neanderthals co-existed for several thousand years. Sites appear to show evidence for interaction between the groups.

THE MAXIMUM EXTENT OF THE LAST ICE AGE

European climates after 23,000 BCE grew steadily cooler, and during the "Last Glacial Maximum" (21,000–18,000 YA) ice-caps covered most of northern Europe. Further south huge areas of grassland with few trees offered good hunting for groups of humans able to survive the cold.

THE "GRAVETTIAN" CULTURE OF Europe and Russia (28,000–21,000 YA) is known for its elaborate sites, which often have complex structures and burials, as well as large amounts of shell jewellery, and sculpted bone and antler. Also found at Gravettian sites are some of the earliest known clay objects, including some of the famous **"Venus" figurines**. These may have been fertility or religious charms, or part of a system of exchange between social networks across the region as the **Ice Age intensified**.

"Venus" statuette
This figurine from Willendorf in Austria depicts a stylized pregnant or obese female figure.

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE GLACIAL Maximum, when the ice caps were at their maximum extent, people living in more northerly and mountainous areas retreated to **"refuge" areas** such as – in Europe – northern Spain and southwest France, where this period is known as the "Solutrean". Globally, **many groups probably died out**, but some held on in more sheltered regions. To survive the harsh conditions, much time and effort was invested in hunting. Weapons include beautifully worked points known as "leaf-points". Although little evidence survives beyond finely worked bone needles, people probably developed **sophisticated clothing** to keep them warm. Perhaps more importantly, hunters would have worked hard to predict and intercept the movements of herds of large animals, ensuring the **hunting success** that was the difference between life and death.

IN EUROPE, SOPHISTICATED BONE and antler points, needles, and harpoons characterize the **"Magdalenian"** technologies that were used to hunt a wide range of species, especially reindeer.

The Magdalenian (18,000–12,000 YA) is famous for its beautiful art objects, engravings, and cave paintings. There are many theories about what these mean and why they were produced. As most depict animals that were hunted, the paintings may represent a magical means of ensuring hunting success, or show information about the best ways to hunt different species. Paintings of imaginary half-human, half-animal creatures and the inaccessibility of some cave art suggests that painting may have been a magical or ritual activity, perhaps practised by shamans or during initiation or religious ceremonies. Alternatively paintings and art objects may have helped establish group identities and territories, as the number of archaeological sites in this period suggests that populations were growing, and competition for rich and localized resources may have been intensifying.

A rise in temperature led to the **retreat of the ice sheets** that had covered northern Europe, and these areas were rapidly recolonized, with **groups expanding** as far north as Siberia by around 14,000–13,000 YA. Some groups later moved on into Alaska and the Americas. Further east in China and in the Jomon culture of Japan, some of the first pots manufactured from clay appeared between 18,000 and 15,000 YA.

Altamira cave paintings
This Paleolithic cave painting of bison was discovered at the Altamira cave site in Spain.

32,000 YA Chauvet **cave paintings**, France

28,000 YA Youngest known **Neanderthal sites**

28–21,000 YA **Gravettian** culture

27,000 YA Complex hunter-gatherer sites on the **Russian plains**

21,000 YA Solutrean technologies appear

21–18,000 YA Last **glacial maximum**

18,000 YA **Magdalenian technologies** appear

18,000 YA Date of the controversial *Homo floresiensis* specimen, **"the hobbit"**

17,000 YA Earliest known atlatl, or spear-thrower, from **Combe Sauniere**, France

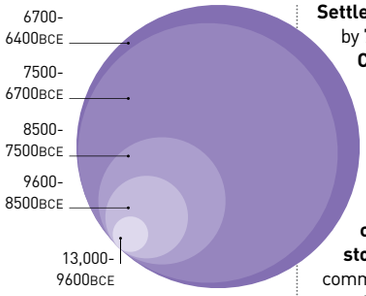
16–15,000 YA Beginning of recolonization of areas of northern **Europe abandoned** during worst climatic conditions

15,000 YA **Monte Verde**, Chile, a South American site with controversially early dates

17,000 YA **Lascaux** cave paintings, France

14,000 YA Earliest **domesticated dog**

Megalithic (large stone) architecture was used for monumental tombs in Neolithic Europe. Developments around 3300 BCE included the construction of stone circles, such as this example at Castlerigg in northern England.



Population density
The population in western Asia grew rapidly from 13,000 to 6400 BCE.

AS STEEPLY RISING TEMPERATURES between 12,700 and 10,800 BCE **melted the northern ice sheets**, global sea-levels rose, lakes formed, and rainfall increased, promoting the **spread of forests and grasslands** and providing new opportunities for hunter-gatherer communities. Coastal areas drowned by rising sea levels were **rich sources of aquatic foods**, as were lakes and rivers. Grasslands sustained large herds of animals, while forest margins provided abundant plant foods and game. **Most hunter-gatherers moved seasonally** to exploit the resources of different areas, but particularly favoured places such as river estuaries could support people year round. One such region was coastal Peru and Chile, where the cold Humboldt current provides especially rich fisheries.

Settled communities lived here by 7000 BCE, including the **Chinchorro** who created the world's first mummies (see panel, opposite).

Another area with favourable conditions was West Asia. Here, vegetation included **wild cereals that could be stored**, sustaining communities throughout the year when supplemented by other wild foods such as gazelle. A period of cold, arid conditions from 10,800 to 9600 BCE led to a steep decline in the availability of wild cereals. This prompted some West Asian villagers to turn to cultivation, planting cereals.

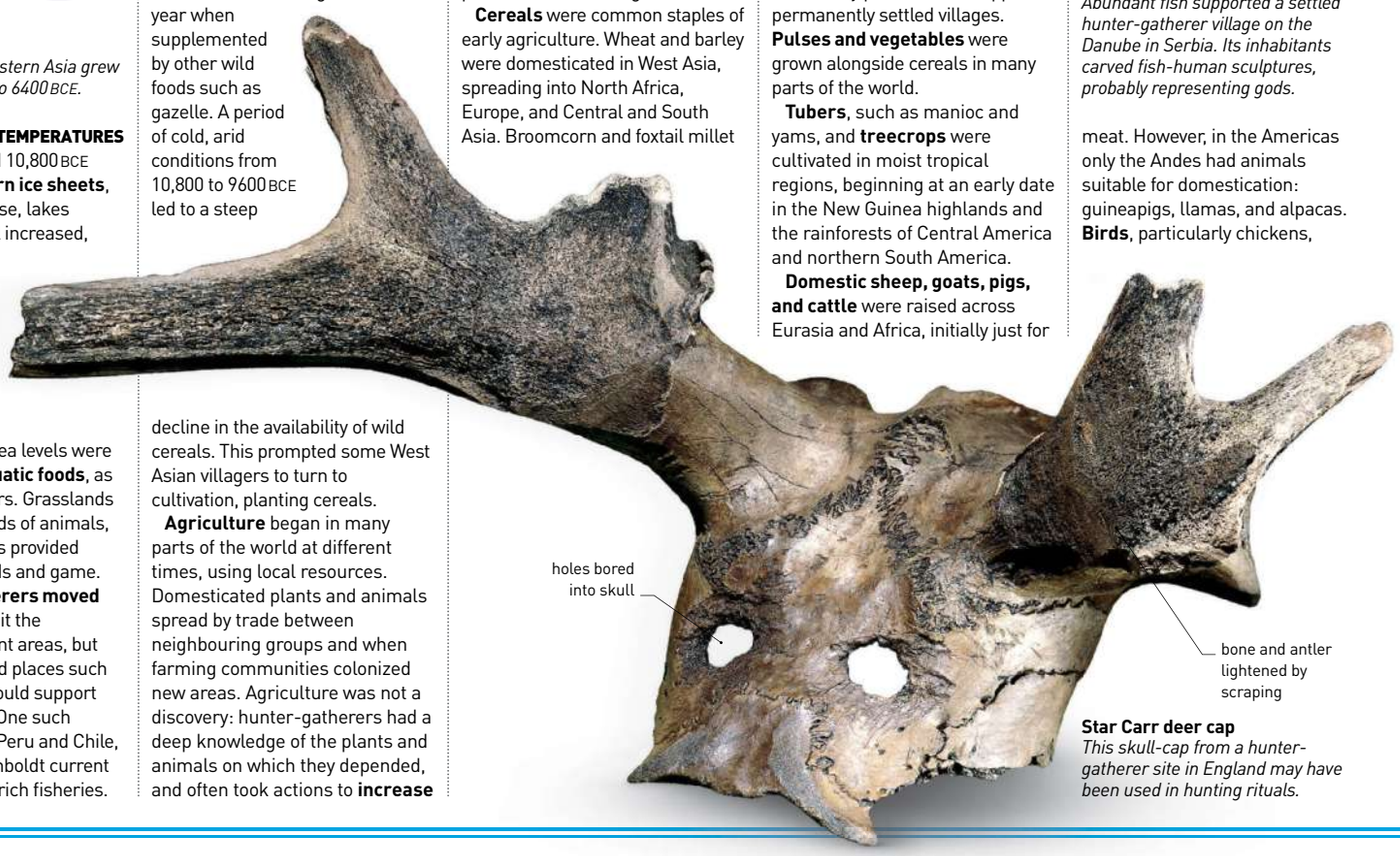
Agriculture began in many parts of the world at different times, using local resources. Domesticated plants and animals spread by trade between neighbouring groups and when farming communities colonized new areas. Agriculture was not a discovery: hunter-gatherers had a deep knowledge of the plants and animals on which they depended, and often took actions to **increase productivity**. Farming was therefore a choice that people made, increasing local productivity, often at the cost of increasing work and risk. Their reasons for farming may have included extending their period of residence in a settled village, providing extra food for feasting or to support a growing population, and boosting the supply of preferred or declining foodstuffs.

Cereals were common staples of early agriculture. Wheat and barley were domesticated in West Asia, spreading into North Africa, Europe, and Central and South Asia. Broomcorn and foxtail millet were domesticated in the Yellow River valley and rice in the Yangzi valley in China, from where they spread through East and Southeast Asia. In Africa, other millets and African rice were domesticated after 3000 BCE. In the Americas, maize was the principal cereal. However, although it was cultivated by 6000 BCE, it was not until 2000 BCE that maize was sufficiently productive to support permanently settled villages. **Pulses and vegetables** were grown alongside cereals in many parts of the world.

Tubers, such as manioc and yams, and **treecrops** were cultivated in moist tropical regions, beginning at an early date in the New Guinea highlands and the rainforests of Central America and northern South America.

Domestic sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle were raised across Eurasia and Africa, initially just for meat. However, in the Americas only the Andes had animals suitable for domestication: guineapigs, llamas, and alpacas. **Birds**, particularly chickens,

Lepinski Vir "fish god"
Abundant fish supported a settled hunter-gatherer village on the Danube in Serbia. Its inhabitants carved fish-human sculptures, probably representing gods.



Star Carr deer cap
This skull-cap from a hunter-gatherer site in England may have been used in hunting rituals.

11,500–9000 BCE Rapid **colonization of the Americas** by people using Clovis stone tools

10,800–9600 BCE Younger Dryas **cold period**, probably caused by melting ice sheets; very rapid rise in temperatures after 9600 BCE

10,500 BCE Earliest **domesticated cereal** – rye in Syria; wheat and barley by 8000 BCE

9500–8000 BCE Construction by hunter-gatherers of **shrine at Göbekli Tepe**, Turkey

9000 BCE Earliest **domesticated animals** in West Asia

9000–7000 BCE Sites in **Cyprus** suggest colonization of the island and the **transportation by boat** of sheep, goat, cattle, and pigs

9000–3000 BCE Increased rainfall produces **"Green Sahara"**: lakes, rivers, marshes, and grasslands across North Africa

8500–7300 BCE **Stone wall** built around large village at **Jericho**, Israel, probably for defence against flooding, not warfare

8000 BCE Earliest agricultural villages in Yellow River valley, **China**, growing **millet**

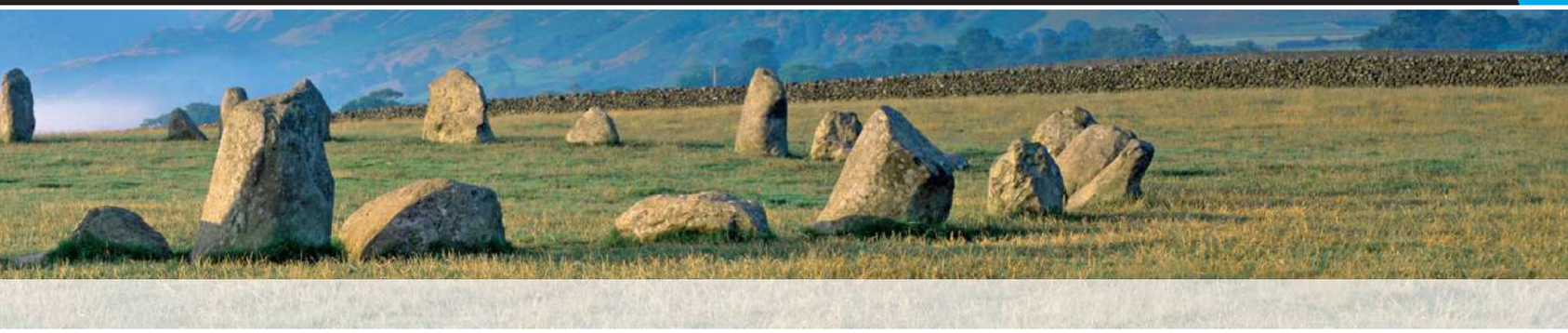
8000 BCE **Squash domesticated** in Mesoamerica; **squash and beans** domesticated in Ecuador

7000 BCE **Zebu cattle domesticated** at Mehrgarh, western Pakistan, by farmers growing wheat, barley, and pulses

7000 BCE **Banana, taro, and yam** cultivated in New Guinea highlands

7000 BCE **Cattle domesticated** by hunter-fisher communities of the Green Sahara

6500 BCE Simple **irrigation agriculture** in central Mesopotamia begins



ducks, and turkeys, were also kept by Old and New World farmers. By 5000 BCE cattle, sheep, and goats were **raised for milk** as well as meat, while cattle were used to pull **ploughs**, enabling people to cultivate much larger areas. **Wool-bearing sheep** were bred in West Asia in the 4th millennium BCE, and rapidly spread into Europe and Central Asia. The use of **pack animals** such as llamas and donkeys allowed long-distance transport.

Agriculture was more productive than foraging and could support **larger communities**. Settled life also encouraged **population growth**. Many early farming villages in West Asia grew to a considerable size. Most remarkable was **Çatalhöyük** in Turkey, occupied around 7400–6200 BCE, which housed as many as 8,000 people. Its tightly packed houses were entered from the roof by ladders, and were decorated with paintings and modelled animal heads.

> “THE **NEOLITHIC** WAS… A POINT IN A CONTINUOUS STORY OF **GREATER ECONOMIC CONTROL** OVER RESOURCES… FROM **SCAVENGING** TO… **FARMING.**”
>
> **Clive Gamble,** from *Origins and revolutions: human identity in earliest prehistory*, 2007

After 7000 BCE **farmers spread** from Turkey into southeast and central Europe, while Mediterranean hunter-gatherers gradually turned to agriculture, using imported West Asian crops and animals. By 3500 BCE most of Europe had adopted farming.

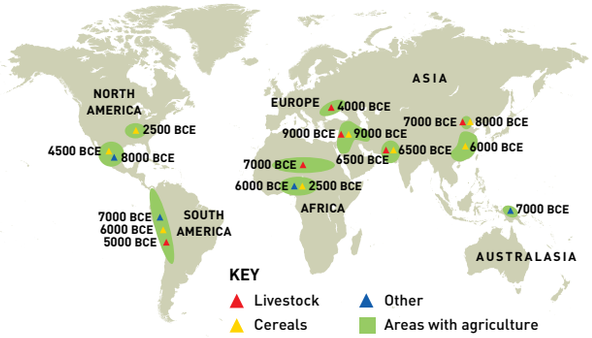
Megaliths – stone chambered tombs of which a wide variety were built, often with earthen mounds – were constructed in western and northern Europe from the early 5th millennium BCE. Most housed the bones of a number of individuals.

Native (naturally occurring pure) **copper and gold** were being shaped into small objects by cold hammering before 8000 BCE in West Asia. Around 7000 BCE, **ores were smelted** here to extract metal and by 6000 BCE copper and lead were also cast. Metals were initially made into small personal objects that could enhance prestige and status. Later, however, copper began to be used for **tools**, and by 4200 BCE copper ores containing arsenic were deliberately selected to produce a harder metal. The addition of tin created a stronger alloy, **bronze**, which was in use in West Asia by 3200 BCE.

The development of **water-control techniques** enabled West Asian farmers to colonize the southern **Mesopotamian plains**, where agriculture depended entirely on irrigation but was highly productive. By the mid 4th millennium BCE, this region was densely populated, and villages were developing into **towns**, with craft specialists. There was a growing demand for raw materials, including metal ores, which often came from distant sources. A **trading network** developed that stretched from Egypt through West Asia to the mountainous borderlands of South Asia, with towns controlling sources of materials and strategic points along the routes. **Sumer** (southern Mesopotamia) was at the forefront of this development, but social, religious, economic, and political complexity was also emerging in **Elam** (southwest Iran) and **Egypt**. All three regions developed **writing systems** before 3000 BCE, which they used to record and manage economic transactions and the ownership of property. The earliest known pictographic writing, around 3300 BCE, comes from **Uruk** in Sumer, a huge and complex settlement that is deservedly known as the **world's first city**.

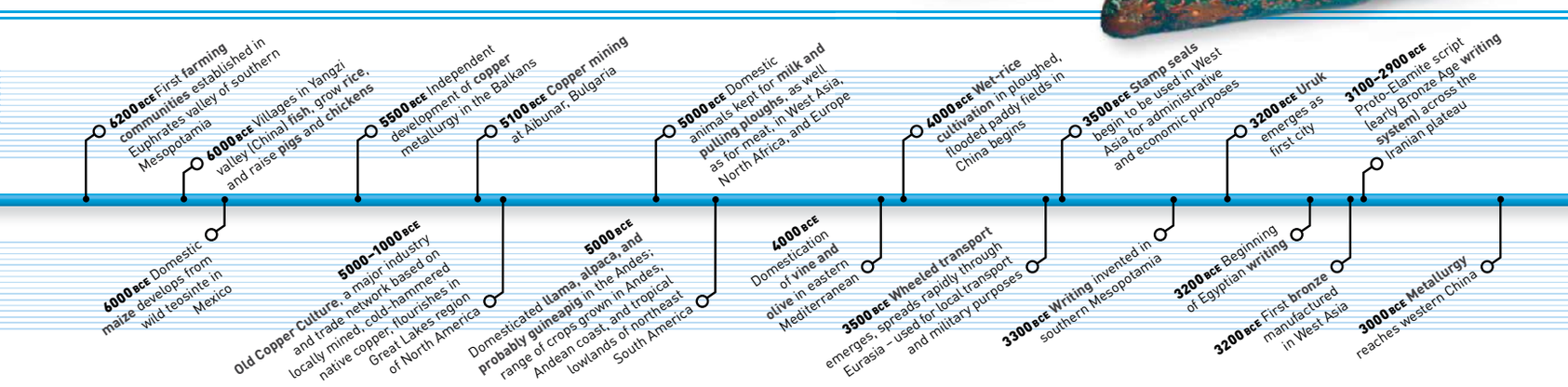
CHINCHORRO MUMMIES

The earliest mummies come not from Egypt, but from coastal northern Chile, an arid region where natural mummies occur from 7000 BCE. After 5000 BCE the Chinchorro began artificial mummification. They removed the flesh, reassembled and reinforced the skeleton, stuffed the skin with plant material, coated it in clay, and painted it with black manganese or red ochre. Only some individuals, particularly children, were mummified.

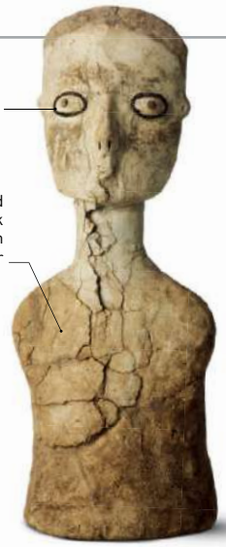


The spread of agriculture
Humans began to cultivate plants and manage animals independently, in different areas at different times, across the world.

Copper axe heads
Gold and copper were the first metals to be worked. They became widespread in Europe around 2500 BCE.



Pottery shard
4000 BCE • ROMANIA
Different cultures can be identified by their unique ways of decorating objects – this shard is typical of the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture.



Human figurine
6750–6500 BCE • JORDAN
This large statue from Ain Ghazal is one of several from sites in the Near East that may have represented ancestors or gods.

Schist plaque
4000 BCE • PORTUGAL
It is unclear what Neolithic engraved plaques, like this one from Alentejo, symbolized, but they seem to have been made for burial with the dead.

Engraved bone
13,000–8000 BCE • FRANCE
Paleolithic artists often carved as well as painted their depictions of animals, as with this scene of a bison being chased, from Laugerie-Basse.

PREHISTORIC PEOPLES

EARLY HUMANS ARE DEFINED BY THE RAW MATERIALS THEY USED TO FASHION TOOLS, WEAPONS, AND ORNAMENTS

Prehistory is traditionally divided into the Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages, but many other kinds of raw materials such as wood, hide, and plant fibres were also used in early technologies. Little evidence of these survives.

As well as being functional aids to survival and subsistence, the objects made by prehistoric peoples would also have been important in their social lives. Different groups develop their own ways of manufacturing and decorating objects, and distinctive designs may become badges of identity or status symbols. The trade and exchange of objects is another vital way in which individuals and groups establish social relationships and hierarchies.

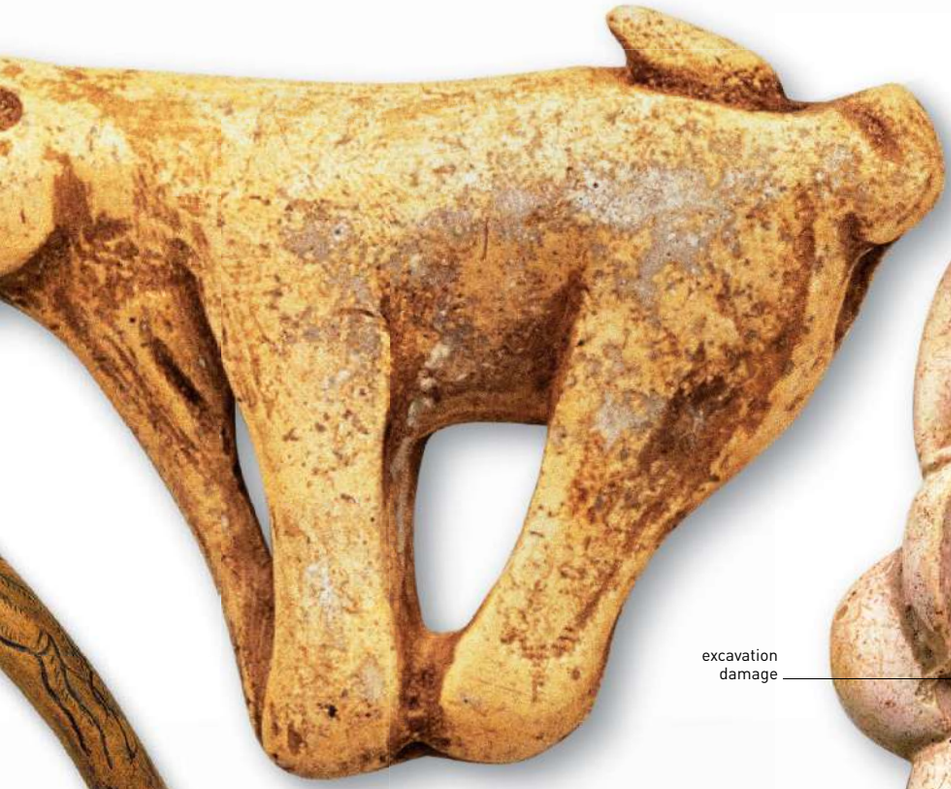
Oldowan tool
2.6–1.7 MYA • AFRICA
The earliest stone tools were simple, sharp-edged flakes of stone, made by striking a stone cobble with a hard "hammerstone".

Blades and core
100,000 BCE ONWARDS • WIDESPREAD
Early modern humans produced uniform, narrow blades that would have been fitted to wooden and antler handles or held in the hand, as tools for many different purposes.

Antler harpoon
8000 BCE • UK
This harpoon head is attached to a long handle for spearing fish – a key source of food when sea levels rose as the last Ice Age ended.

Flint hand-axe
200,000 BCE • UK
Hand-axes, such as this one from Swanscombe, were skilfully made and used for a wide range of activities, including woodworking and butchery.

Digging tools with adze heads
11,660–4000 BCE • EUROPE
These Mesolithic adzes were used for digging up edible roots or cutting wood in the forests that spread across Europe after the last Ice Age ended.



Carved spear-thrower
10,500 BCE • FRANCE
Spear-throwers, such as this one from Montastruc, were often carved into animal shapes – here, a woolly mammoth made from antler. They enabled hunters to throw spears further and with greater force.

Lespugue Venus
24,000–22,000 BCE • FRANCE
This ivory figurine from Lespugue in the Pyrenees is one of many "Venus" figurines – depicting women who are pregnant or obese, or whose female features are greatly exaggerated.

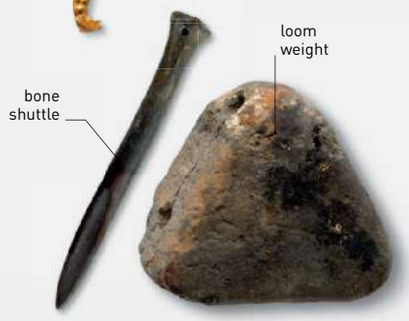
Clay burial chest
4000 BCE • NEAR EAST
One Chalcolithic ("copper age") burial practice involved leaving the dead out to decay, then collecting the bones and placing them in clay chests like this one.

Mummified head
7000–3000 BCE • PERU
In very dry climates, bodies can become mummified. Some of the earliest mummies have been found in Peruvian deserts.

Agricultural tools
9500 BCE–1834 CE • WIDESPREAD
First wild and later domesticated cereals were harvested using sickles like these, until they were superseded in most places by the invention of the combine harvester.

Gold jewellery
4700–4200 BCE • BULGARIA
At the cemetery of Varna in Bulgaria, more than 3,000 pieces of some of the earliest gold jewellery have been found, mainly buried with elite males.

Neolithic seal
7500–5700 BCE • ANATOLIA
Seals such as this one from the settlement of Çatal Höyük were used during the Neolithic to stamp decorative designs on to skin or cloth.



Cloth-making tools
6500 BCE • ORIGIN UNKNOWN
From the mid-Neolithic, weaving became common. Loom weights held vertical threads taut; bone shuttles were used to weave horizontal threads in and out.

2

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS

3000–700 BCE

This period saw the emergence of complex civilizations. Communities flourished and trade developed in the fertile valleys of Egypt, India, western Asia, and China. Europe, and Central and South America also flourished during this time.

3000–2700 BCE

Stonehenge in western Britain was a ceremonial site from around 3100 BCE. An early earth enclosure and a circle of wooden posts was later replaced by the outer circle of stones seen here.

DURING THE LAST HALF OF THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM BCE, the world's first civilizations arose, first in Western Asia, then North Africa and South Asia. Civilization also appeared in China in the early second millennium BCE. By 3000 BCE, **the world's first urban culture** had begun to develop in southern **Mesopotamia**, in what is now Iraq. The lower Euphrates River plains had been farmed from *c.*6200 BCE, after the development of irrigation systems – the Greek word "mesopotamia" means "land between the rivers". By 3500 BCE, farming communities were growing into towns and then cities such as Ur, Uruk, and Eridu. Over the next 300 years, each city came to dominate its surrounding area, forming a group of city-states in the land called Sumer in southeast Mesopotamia.

Metalworking had begun in Mesopotamia around 6000 BCE. Around 3200 BCE, Sumerian smiths began **manufacturing bronze**. The plough had been in use since about 5000 BCE, wheeled carts from around 3500 BCE, and such advances made farming more productive. The resulting food surplus freed some people from the farming life, allowing **specialization into professions** such as priesthood, crafts, trade, and administration. The **world's first tiered society** developed, headed by kings sometimes known as lugals.

In **Egypt**, one of the world's **most complex ancient civilizations** was forming along the banks of the River Nile by 3100 BCE. The Nile formed a narrow strip of cultivatable land, floodplain, as the river's annual flood (known as the inundation) spread black silt along its banks. The Egyptian farming year began in autumn when the inundation subsided, and farmers cultivated wheat, barley, beans, and lentils in the fertile soil.

By the end of the 4th millennium BCE, farming communities had evolved into two kingdoms: **Upper Egypt** in the south and **Lower Egypt** in the north. **King Narmer** united the two kingdoms *c.*3100 BCE. After Narmer came **Menes**, although historians are unsure whether Menes was Narmer's successor or a different name for Narmer himself. Menes is credited with founding the Egyptian capital at Memphis and Egypt's first dynasty.

As in Mesopotamia, efficient agriculture produced prosperity and specialism, allowing **arts, crafts, engineering, and early medicine** to develop.

The Early Dynastic Period (*c.*3100–2686 BCE) was already characterized by many of the celebrated aspects of Egyptian culture: **hieroglyphic** writing, a sophisticated **religion** (including belief in an afterlife), and preserving the dead using **mummification**. A complex hierarchical society developed, with the king at the apex accorded semi-divine status. Egyptian kings – later known as **pharaohs** – ruled with the help of a chief minister, or vizier, regional governors (nomarchs), and a huge staff of lesser officials including priests, tax collectors, and scribes.

In China, civilization originated in the valleys of eastern rivers such as the Huang He (Yellow River), where the rich loess soil made the land fertile. As early as 8000 BCE, millet had been cultivated in the area around Yangshao in Henan Province. Around *c.*2400 BCE, the neighbouring Dawenkou culture developed into the **Longshan culture** of Shangdong Province. Longshan farmers grew rice after developing irrigation systems. As in other early civilizations, agricultural success allowed the development of an elaborate society. Chinese craftsmen were making **bronze tools** *c.*3000 BCE, **jade vessels** *c.*2700 BCE, and **silk weaving** had begun by 3500 BCE.

The **Bronze Age** was underway in western Asia by 3000 BCE, and possibly considerably earlier. The Bronze Age in Europe seems to have developed separately from around 2500 BCE, using ore sources from the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe. This era also saw the beginnings of the **Minoan civilization** on the Greek island of Crete around 2000 BCE, with trading links to the nearby Cyclades Islands and the wider Mediterranean. In Western Europe, the earlier tradition of megalithic tomb building and a growing interest in astronomical observation gave rise to a new **megalithic tradition** of erecting stone circles, stone rows, standing stones, and tombs including astronomical features. **These include** Newgrange in Ireland, Stonehenge in England, and Carnac in France.

50 THOUSAND THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF URUK *c.*2800 BCE

Ancient cities of Mesopotamia
Sumer in southern Mesopotamia was the location of the world's first urban civilization from c.2900 BCE as agricultural success led to a complex society.

KEY
- Extent of Early Dynastic city-states
- Ancient coastline

Narmer Palette
This carved piece of green siltstone records the triumph of the legendary King Narmer of Upper Egypt over his enemies.

c.3200–2600 BCE Early Indus period – towns and regional cultures in Indus Valley

c.3100–2890 BCE First dynasty of Egypt. Early Dynastic Period begins (to *c.*2686 BCE)

c.3000 BCE Bronze Age underway in western Asia (*c.*3200–*c.*1200 BCE)

c.3000 BCE Evidence of copper-working in southern France

c.3000–2334 BCE Early Dynastic Period in Mesopotamia; City-states such as Ur, Uruk, and Eridu flourish in Sumer

c.3000 BCE Longshan culture developing in China (*c.*3200–*c.*3000 BCE)

c.3000–2500 BCE Andean farmers grow potatoes and quinoa, and raise alpacas and llamas

c.3000 BCE King Menes rules over a united Egypt made up of Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt

c.3000 BCE Dawn of Minoan civilization on Crete

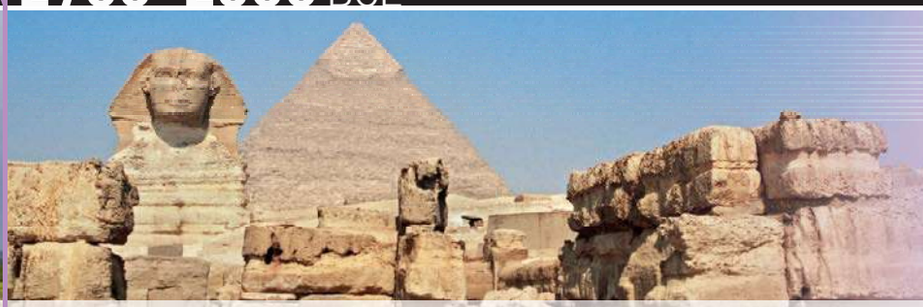
c.2900 BCE Cuneiform script develops in Sumer, Mesopotamia

c.2900–2400 BCE Wooden structures built at Stonehenge ceremonial complex

c.2890–2686 BCE Second dynasty of Egypt

c.2800–2700 BCE First ceremonial centres develop in South America, along coast of Peru

c.2750 BCE First bronze artefacts found in China



The three pyramids at Giza **were built for the pharaohs Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura between 2575 and 2465 BCE. They are guarded by the statue of the Sphinx, which may bear the features of King Khafra.**

2.3 MILLION
THE NUMBER OF **BLOCKS** USED TO BUILD THE GREAT **PYRAMID** OF GIZA

Standard of Ur
This box-like object has two side panels – one depicting war, the other (shown here) times of peace.

SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA was a patchwork of over 40 city-states, among which Ur, Uruk, Nippur, and Kish were the most important. **Trade flourished** using a network of rivers and canals, and trade links extended to Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), Iran, and Afghanistan, with grain, minerals, timber, tools, and vessels traded. The **Sumerian** population was unique in being **predominantly urban**. In Ur, Uruk, and other centres, people lived in clustered mud-brick houses. At the heart of the city, the **ziggurat** – a terraced temple mound – provided the focus for religious ceremonies, and grain was stored in storerooms within the temple precincts. From around 2500 BCE, some citizens of Ur were buried in **tombs** along with treasures such as the **Standard of Ur**. The purpose of its intricate side panels is still a mystery; they may have formed the soundbox of a lyre.

Cuneiform tablet
Over time, the inventory of signs regularly used in cuneiform script was greatly reduced.

Arising from the need to keep economic and administrative records, the **first pictographic writing** developed in **Sumer** (*c.*3300 BCE). Pictographs (pictorial writing representing a word or phrase) evolved into a script called **cuneiform** *c.*2900 BCE, in which scribes pressed sharpened reeds into soft clay to leave wedge-shaped impressions.

Southern Mesopotamia became densely populated, putting pressure on natural resources. This led to **conflicts** over land and water, and alliances between cities were forged and broken.

The first signs of **civilization in the Americas** appeared along the coast of Peru and in the Andes *c.*2800 BCE. **Andean farmers** grew potatoes and the cereal quinoa, and raised alpacas and llamas. There were fishing communities on the coast, while inland towns became ceremonial centres, built around mud-brick temple platforms. An exceptional example is **Caral**, about 200km (125 miles) from Lima and dating from *c.*2600 BCE. Another, **Aspero**, had six platform mounds topped by temples. Cotton was grown in the region, and maize was cultivated from around 2700 BCE.

The **Indus Valley civilization** began to emerge in South Asia in the fourth millenium BCE, as **flood control technology** developed. By 2600 BCE, the Indus Plain contained dozens of towns and cities. Of these, **Mohenjo-daro** on the River Indus, and **Harappa**, to the northeast, were pre-eminent, with populations of around 100,000 and 60,000 respectively.

In **Egypt**, King Sanakht acceded to the throne in the year 2686 BCE, marking the beginning of the Third dynasty and the **Old Kingdom** era – a time of strong, centralized rule and **pyramid-building**. These magnificent monuments were built as **royal tombs**. In Early Dynastic times, kings had been buried beneath rectangular mud-brick platforms called mastabas. Around 2650 BCE, the first pyramid, the **Step Pyramid of Saqqara**, was completed for King Djoser. Designed by the architect Imhotep, it resembled six stone mastabas on top of one another.

Straight-sided pyramids appeared soon after, the greatest of which were the **three pyramids at Giza**. These incredible feats of engineering were constructed not by slaves as was once thought, but by a staff of full-time craftsmen and masons supplemented by farmers performing a type of national service during the Nile floods. Enormous blocks of stone (lower stones of 6–10 tonnes; higher ones of 1–2 tonnes) were cut from local quarries, hauled on site using sleds, and then heaved up ramps, which grew ever-higher as construction progressed.

c.2686–2613 BCE Third dynasty of **Egypt** starts with King Sanakht

c.2686 BCE Old Kingdom period, an era of powerful kings, begins in Egypt (lasts until *c.*2181 BCE)

c.2667–2650 BCE Step Pyramid built at Saqqara, Egypt, for King Djoser (r.2667–2648 BCE)

c.2613–2494 BCE Fourth dynasty of Egypt; includes the **pyramid-building pharaohs** Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura

c.2600 BCE Ceremonial **centres**, such as Caral, built in coastal **Peru**

c.2600 BCE Rulers of Ur buried in royal graves, according to legend, reign of King Gilgamesh of Uruk in Sumer

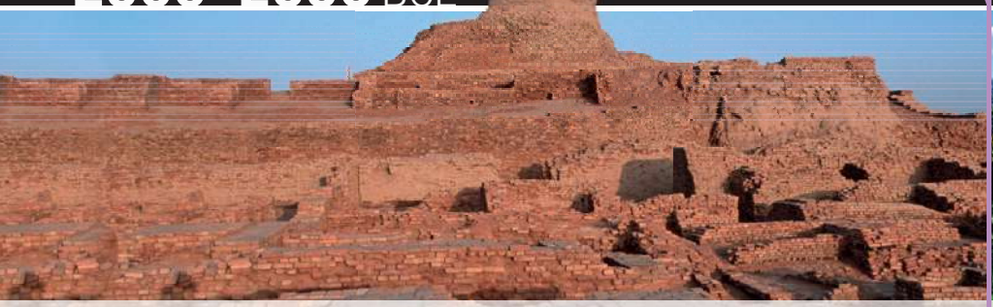
c.2589 BCE Construction of three **pyramids** begins at **Giza**, Egypt (completed *c.*2504 BCE)

c.2600 BCE Plough in use in the **Indus Valley**

c.2500 BCE Bronze Age begins in Europe, with earliest bronze artefacts discovered in Poland

c.2500 BCE Outer circle **of stones** erected at Stonehenge, Britain

2500–2350 BCE



The ruined citadel of Mohenjo-daro was made up of various buildings. It was built on a platform to guard against flooding of the River Indus.

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 3RD MILLENNIUM BCE, civilizations continued to develop in western Asia, Egypt, and and southern Asia, and complex societies were emerging in China, Europe, and South America.

In southern Asia, the **Indus civilization** (see 2700–2500BCE) emerged in its mature form around 2500BCE, stretching 1,700km (1,060 miles) from east to west and 1,300km (800 miles) from north to south. The region's prosperity was based on farming, mining, crafts, and trade. More than 100 sites have been excavated, including the cities of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Dholovira.

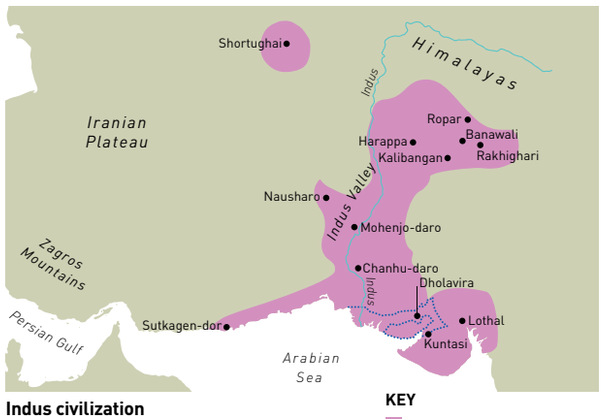
Mohenjo-daro and **Harappa** were **well-planned** cities laid out on a grid system. Each city was protected by brick walls and dominated by a **citadel** overlooking a "lower town" of public buildings and residential **town houses** of one or two storeys. The residential areas were seemingly divided by industry, such as pottery, bead-making, and metalworking.

Indus cities and towns had the most **advanced plumbing** system in the ancient world, with enclosed wells and covered drains. Latrines emptied waste into drains, which ran below the streets.

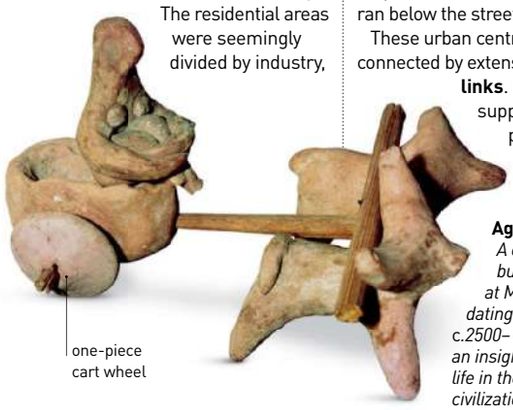
These urban centres were also connected by extensive **trade links**. Merchants supplied craft products from the valleys to the surrounding regions in return for metal ores, precious stones, and timber. Long-distance trade routes reached as far as Mesopotamia and Afghanistan.

By around 2500 BCE, an **Indus script** of hundreds of signs appeared on seals and pottery. Attempts to decipher the script have failed; hence, many aspects of this culture remain a mystery.

In western Asia, **Mesopotamia** (see 2700–2500BCE) remained a patchwork of small but **powerful city-states**, each controlling the surrounding farmlands where barley, pulses, and date palms were grown. To the west, city-states were developing in Syria and the Levant. A **trade network** linking Mesopotamian towns suggests co-operation between states, but there was **frequent warfare** as well.

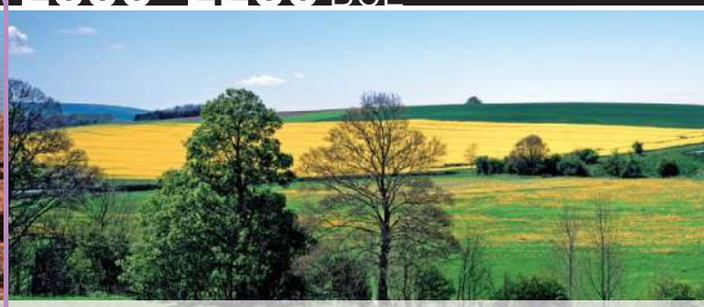


Indus civilization
Excavations suggest that the Indus civilization covered an area far larger than Mesopotamia and Egypt combined.



Agrarian lives
A clay model of a bullock cart found at Mohenjo-daro, dating back to c.2500–1900 BCE, gives an insight into farming life in the Indus civilization.

2350–2200 BCE



Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, England, is one of the tallest man-made chalk mounds in Europe. These mounds probably had a social or cultural function.

A NEW POWER AROSE IN MESOPOTAMIA *c.*2334BCE, **King Sargon** (*c.*2334–2215 BCE) from the northern region of **Akkad** defeated Lugalzagesi of Umma to become the ruler of Sumer. Through subsequent campaigns to the Levant, Syria, and Anatolia, Sargon carved out the **world's first empire** – the Akkadian Empire – stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to the Gulf.

Sargon's exploits were recorded in several documents, such as the *Sumerian King List*. His name means "**legitimate king**", which led some scholars to believe that he took power through force. Sargon spoke Akkadian, a Semitic language that replaced Sumerian as the official language of the empire.

> "UNDER HIM **ALL COUNTRIES** LAY [CONTENTED] IN THEIR MEADOWS, AND THE **LAND REJOICED.**"
>
> **Lugalzagesi, king of Sumer**, defeated by Sargon *c.*2316 BCE

Akkadian rule was enforced through regional governors who collected tributes and taxes. The **empire's weakness** lay in its lack of defensible **borders**, and it came under regular **attacks** from neighbouring **hill tribes**. Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin, extended the empire, but it lasted for only four generations before falling to attacks. Sargon's rule established a practice of statewide bureaucratic controls and standardization in many aspects of economic life.

In **Egypt**, this period saw a **weakening** of the power of the **Old Kingdom** rulers (see 2700–2500BCE), in favour of regional governors called **nomarchs**, who administered different parts of the Nile valley and delta. To the south of the first cataract on the Nile, the kingdom of Nubia also grew **more powerful**. Nubia was centred around the city of Kerma at the third cataract. By the end of the **Sixth dynasty** (*c.*2184 BCE), the

BRONZE AGE EUROPE

Bronze-working had begun in West Asia *c.*3200BCE (see 10,000–3000BCE). It was developed by the Únětice culture of Bohemia and Poland *c.*2500BCE, and 200 years later had spread to Italy and the Balkans. Bronze provided a hard metal for forging armour, weapons, and tools such as this hand axe. The bronze industry also increased trade, making Europe more interconnected than ever before.

c.2500 BCE Longshan culture in China produces pottery, bronze, and silk

c.2500 BCE Ur a major centre of manufacturing

c.2500 BCE Ebla, Mari, and other cities in Syria and the Levant emerge

c.2500 BCE Bronze Age begins in Central Europe

c.2500 BCE Mature phase of Indus civilization emerges

c.2500 BCE Indus script emerges

c.2500 BCE Ceremonial centres, Aspero and Kotosh, continue to be built in coastal Peru and the Andes

c.2350 BCE Lugalzagesi of Umma unites all Sumer

c.2345–2181 BCE Sixth dynasty of Egypt founded

c.2500 BCE Old Kingdom Period continues in Egypt

c.2500 BCE Bell Beaker culture spreads in Western and Central Europe

c.2500 BCE Evidence of long-distance trade routes in South America

c.2400 BCE Eannatum of Lagash rules areas of Sumer

c.2400 BCE All stones erected at Stonehenge ceremonial complex in southwest Britain

c.2334–2316 BCE Sargon of Akkad conquers Sumer to create world's first empire

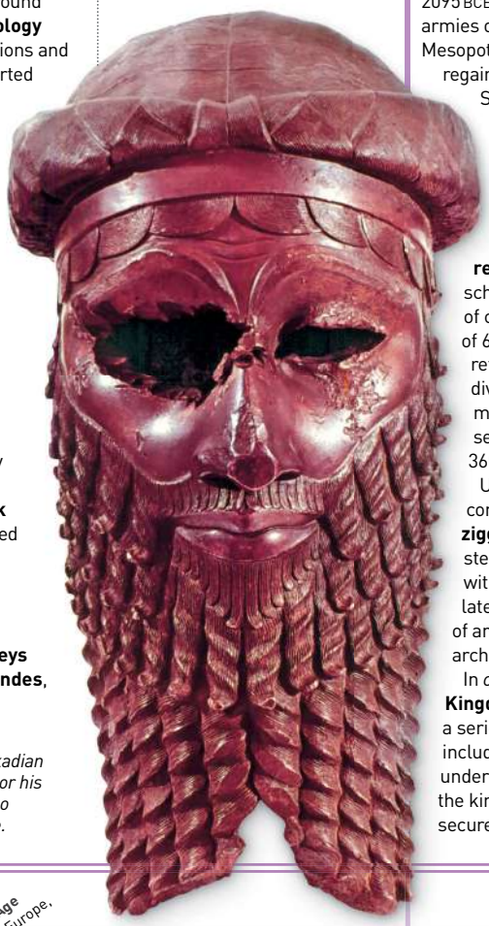
Relief sculptures in Egyptian tombs represented everyday life and religious rituals. This carving from the Sixth dynasty shows boys with sticks, on the left, and youths wrestling, on the right.

authority of the Egyptian rulers had steadily eroded.

In **Western Europe**, the **Bell Beaker culture** flourished. Named after the distinctive shape of **pottery vessels** found in graves, this culture emerged by *c.*2600 BCE in France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Over the next three centuries, it spread to Germany and Britain. Around 2300 BCE, **bronze technology** from Mediterranean regions and from Central Europe started to **spread** northwards **along** the **Rhine** and **Danube**. The increasingly militaristic societies used bronze to create weapons, triggering the appearance of **small chiefdoms** across Europe.

As populations grew, **competition** over **land** and **resources** intensified. Fields were enclosed, farming expanded, and boundary walls built. Imposing structures such as **chalk mounds** were constructed in many areas.

In **South America**, societies continued to develop in two distinct regions: the upland **valleys** and **high plains** of the **Andes**, and along the **Pacific coast** and inland valleys. Andean cultures were based on **farming** and **herding**. **Coastal settlements** such as Aspero (Peru) were unique in their dependence on **fishing** rather than on agriculture. The coastal people grew cotton for textiles, and gourds, which were used as fishing floats.



Akkadian warrior king
This bronze cast of an Akkadian ruler may depict Sargon I or his grandson, Naram-Sin, who extended Sargon's empire.

THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE OF GUTIUM ATTACKED the Akkadian Empire *c.*2150 BCE. **Sumerian states** such as Kish, Ur, and Lagash took the opportunity to **reassert** their **independence**. For the next 80 years, the city-states vied for control in Mesopotamia. In 2112 BCE, **Ur** under Ur-Nammu (r.2112–2095 BCE) gained ascendancy. The armies of Ur overran eastern Mesopotamia and Elam, and regained much of Sargon's empire.

Ur-Nammu founded the **Third dynasty of Ur**, which witnessed a **revival of Sumerian power**, as well as an artistic and cultural **renaissance**. Sumerian scholars devised a method of counting, based on units of 60. This system is reflected in our modern division of hours into 60 minutes, minutes into 60 seconds, and a circle into 360 degrees.

Ur-Nammu also commissioned the **first ziggurat** in Ur – an imposing stepped platform topped with a temple. The ziggurats later became a characteristic of ancient western Asian architecture.

In *c.*2181 BCE, Egypt's **Old Kingdom collapsed** following a series of natural disasters, including famine. This undermined the authority of the king, who was believed to secure the annual floods that brought fertility to the Nile valley. The rule of Memphis, the capital city of the Old Kingdom, was overthrown as nomarchs and nobles seized control of the provinces. This ushered in a time of **unrest** called the **First Intermediate Period**, the first of the three eras of uncertainty in Egyptian history. For 140 years, kingdoms such as Herakleopolis in central Egypt vied for control with Thebes in the south. In *c.*2040 BCE, the Theban ruler Nebhepetre **Mentuhotep** defeated his rivals and **united Egypt** once more, beginning the start of what came to be known as the **Middle Kingdom**.

In China, the Neolithic **Longshan culture** (see 3200 BCE) continued to develop along the Yellow River in Shandong province. According to Chinese historical tradition, the **first dynasty**, **Xia** (Hsia), was **founded** by Yu the Great. However, **no archaeological evidence** has been found to confirm the existence of **a centralized state** in China at this time.

100 THOUSAND THE LIKELY **POPULATION** OF **UR** *c.*2100

Longshan pottery
This elegant pottery tripod jug has tapering legs and swirling patterns, characteristic of the Longshan culture.

By the end of the 3rd millennium, **Europe's first civilization** was emerging on the Mediterranean island of **Crete**, which lay at the heart of Mediterranean trade routes. Known as the **Minoan civilization**, it grew prosperous through **trade** and **farming**. Cretan farmlands produced wheat, olives, wine, and wool, which could be easily transported by sea. The Minoans also made bronzework, pottery, and dyes for export. By 2000 BCE, Crete was home to several small kingdoms.

c.2300 BCE Bronze Age **begins** in southern Europe, in Italy and the Balkans

2278–2184 BCE Reign of **Pepy II** of the Sixth dynasty in **Egypt**

c.2205 BCE Xia dynasty **founded** in eastern **China** by Yu the Great, according to Chinese tradition; said to have ruled until 1766

c.2181 BCE Sixth dynasty and Old Kingdom period **ends** in **Egypt** after natural disasters weaken authority of ruler

c.2150 BCE Gutians defeat Akkadians; **city-states** of **Mesopotamia**, such as Lagash, **reassert independence**

c.2181 BCE First **Intermediate Period begins** in Egypt (to 2040 BCE)

c.2112–2095 BCE Reign of **Ur-Nammu** of Ur reunites much of Mesopotamia; rebuilds Ur's temple as a ziggurat

c.2150 BCE Nubian **kingdom emerges** south of Egypt, based at Kerma on Third Cataract of Nile

c.2050 BCE Emergence of the **Minoan palace civilization**, Crete

2112 BCE Third Dynasty **of Ur**, founded by Ur-Nammu (to 2004 BCE)

c.2040 BCE Mentuhotep **founds** a new **capital** at Itj-Tawy near Memphis; **Middle Kingdom begins**

c.2040 BCE Nebhepetre **Mentuhotep** of Thebes defeats rivals to **unite Egypt**

2004 BCE City of **Ur falls** to Elamites, ending **dynasty of Ur**

Egyptian hieroglyphic and hieratic script
This ancient Egyptian papyrus manuscript shows two forms of Egyptian writing: hieratic script (left) and hieroglyphic script (right) above the two figures. Hieroglyphic is an elaborate script in which signs take a highly pictorial form, while hieratic is a simplified version of hieroglyphic for ease of speed and writing.

Prehistory
Pictograms
Pictures painted on walls of caves up to 25,000 years ago are considered a precursor to writing, recording information that could then be understood by others.

Cave images by Anasazi Indians

3300 BCE
Cuneiform
The first proper written script is developed by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Writing with a reed stylus creates a wedge-shaped impression on tablets of wet clay, which then dry hard.

Mesopotamian tablet

***c.*3200 BCE**
Egyptian hieroglyphs
Egyptian writing develops 100 years after cuneiform. This script begins as a form of picture writing, and includes signs for words and also sounds. It remains in use until the 4th century CE.

***c.*1900 BCE**
Chinese writing
The first surviving Chinese writing appears on oracle bones, used in divination. This ancient script is still in use today. Chinese script involves 50,000 characters that stand for words.

Chinese paper scroll

8th century BCE
The Greek alphabet
The first alphabets, using only consonants, develop in the Levant by *c.*1150 BCE. They include the Phoenician alphabet, which spreads to the Greeks through trade, who add vowels.

Greek wax tablet

***c.*6th century BCE**
Parchment
Made from dried and processed animal skins, parchment becomes a popular medium for writing around the 6th century BCE, taking over from papyrus, a paper made from reeds.

Chinese parchment scroll

100
The Roman alphabet
The Romans adapt the Greek script to write Latin. Through the Roman Empire, this alphabet spreads across Europe and is used for personal as well as official correspondence.

THE STORY OF WRITING

FROM CAVE PAINTINGS TO THE DIGITAL AGE, WRITING IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CIVILIZATION

The development of writing was an amazing breakthrough as it allowed people to communicate over distance and record information for posterity. Writing evolved separately in different cultures: in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley before 2500 BCE and later in Crete, China, and Mesoamerica.

Some scholars consider that prehistoric cave paintings featuring images and symbols constitute a form of writing. The first proper script was developed by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia (now Iraq) around 3300 BCE. Soon, a number of different ancient cultures had developed writing, usually to keep economic records or track of time. As writing developed, it was commonly used to reinforce the authority of rulers. Many early texts, including monumental ones in stone, glorify the deeds of kings and attribute their success to divine approval.

Writing systems can be divided into three types, according to the function of the signs used: logographic, syllabic, and alphabetic. However, some scripts make use of two types of signs. In logographic scripts, each sign stands for a whole word; Chinese writing is an example, although it also uses syllabic signs. The drawback is that a very large number of symbols are needed (Chinese has 50,000 characters). In syllabic scripts, signs stand for syllables. A smaller but still large number of signs are needed – 700 in Babylonian cuneiform. In alphabetic scripts, each sign stands for a sound. Far fewer symbols are needed – usually around 26. The first alphabets developed in the Levant between 1450 and 1150 BCE. For years, the spread of writing was limited by the labour involved in hand-copying texts, but this changed with the invention of printing. In the late 20th century, writing became electronic with the invention of word processors. In the 1990s, the spread of information was again revolutionized by the arrival of the Internet.

Ancient texts in the digital world
Nowadays, ancient texts can be viewed digitally. Here, a student examines a digitized page of the Codex Sinaiticus, *handwritten in Greek over 1,600 years ago.*

Roman mosaic

Modern sign

PICTOGRAPHIC SYMBOLS

Pictograms, or picture signs, are an ancient form of communication. Some scholars do not consider pictograms to be "true" writing, since the symbols do not convey the sounds of words in any language. For example, the pictures above – from a house in Roman Pompeii dating to 79 CE, and a modern sign – convey the same warning. The symbol can be read in any language, for example as *canis*, *chien*, *Hund*, or dog. Those words convey the same idea but reproduce the sounds of different languages – Latin, French, German, and English. Pictograms have limited use but remain widespread, appearing for example on street signs, maps, and clothes labels.

4th century
The codex
The codex, or manuscript in book form, gradually supersedes the roll of parchment. Originally developed by the Romans, the use of codices spreads with the Christian religion.

7th–9th centuries
Illuminated manuscripts
In early medieval times, the use of writing spreads through the copying of Christian texts. Illuminated manuscripts are highly decorative, with ornate capital letters and marginal illustrations.

Book of Durrow

7th century
Arabic script
The Arabic alphabet is used to write down the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. Its use spreads with the Islamic faith to become one of the world's most widely used scripts.

Medieval Qur'an

c.1450
Invention of printing
In medieval times, the laboriousness of copying by hand limits the spread of writing. The invention of printing using moveable type makes writing far more accessible. In 1500, an estimated 35,000 texts are in print.

1867–1868
The typewriter
American inventor Christopher Latham Sholes helps to build the first practical typewriter. The patent is sold to Remington, who puts the first typewriters on sale in 1874.

The Remington Model I

1884
The fountain pen
The first practical fountain pen is produced by American inventor L.E. Waterman, and quickly replaces the quill pen. Biros, invented by László Bíró, are in use by the 1940s.

Waterman fountain pen

1971
Writing enters the digital age
In 1971, Ray Tomlinson sends the first electronic message (email) from one computer to another. Emails become popular with the spread of personal computers in the 1980s.

1990–present
Text messaging
In the 1990s, the first text messages are sent via mobile phones. Texting becomes very popular in the 2000s. In 2009, more than 1.5 trillion text messages are sent.

Smartphone

Egyptian hieroglyphics involved the use of pictorial signs. This example is from a coffin from the Middle Kingdom period.

THE MINOAN CIVILIZATION, named after the legendary King Minos, **flourished** on the **Aegean island** of **Crete** in the early 2nd millennium, reaching its peak between 2000 and 1600 BCE. It is thought that Crete's **prosperity** was based on the **export** of **pottery**, **gold**, and **bronze**, as well as possibly grain, wine, and oil, to Egypt, Cyprus, and Palestine. The Minoans established colonies in many parts of the Aegean, including the islands of Kythera, Thera, Melos, and Rhodes, and at Miletos on the Turkish mainland.

The farmlands of Crete were ruled from cities with **central palaces** that housed workshops, the administration, religious facilities, and state storerooms. Those at Knossos, Phaestos, Mallia, and Zakros were particularly impressive, judging by their remains. Around 1700 BCE, these palaces were burnt down, and only **Knossos** was **rebuilt**, on a more magnificent scale than before, suggesting its dominance over the entire island. The palace was five storeys high, with rooms opening onto inner courtyards. This maze-like complex is thought to have given rise to the labyrinth in the **legend** of the **Minotaur**, a bull-headed monster.

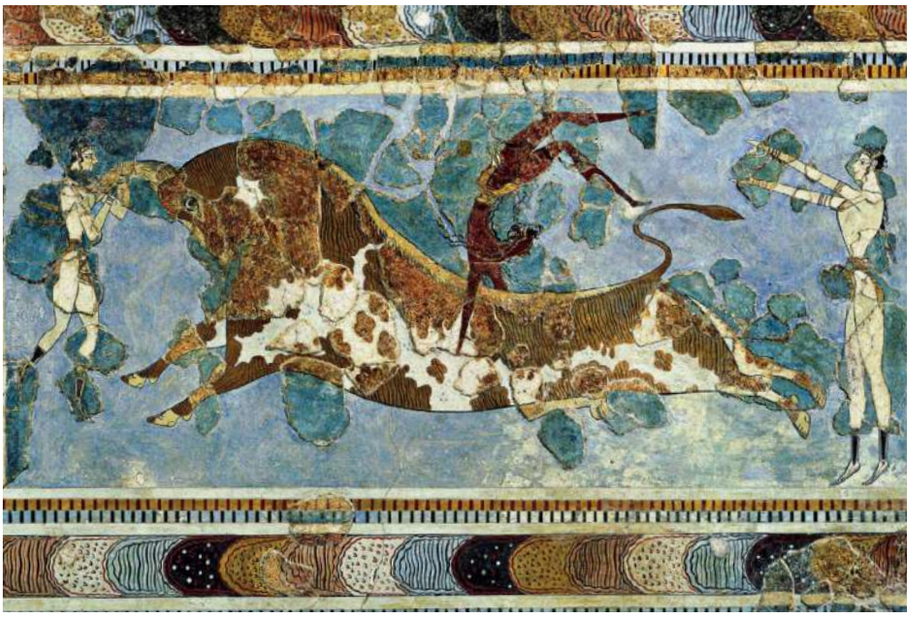
Bulls certainly featured in Minoan ceremonies. The **deities** worshipped in Minoan shrines seem to have been **female**, with a **goddess of nature** being the most popular. However, details of Minoan culture remain obscure since the Minoan scripts, known as Cretan hiroglyphic and Linear A, have yet to be undeciphered.

In Egypt, King Mentuhotep had reunited the country at the end of the 3rd millennium (see 2350–2000 BCE). Yet, the second of Egypt's eras of strong, centralized rule only **began with** the reign of **Amenemhet I**, from about 1985 BCE, during the Middle Kingdom. In 1965 BCE, his successor **Senwosret I** conquered the land of **Nubia** to the south, extending Egypt's borders as far as the second cataract of the Nile. Nubia yielded gold, copper, and slaves to swell the ranks of Egypt's army. Around a century later, **Senwosret III** also made **Levant** a vassal state of Egypt.

Middle-Kingdom Egypt was **more democratic** than it was during the Old Kingdom period. Rulers presented themselves as shepherds of the state rather than absolute monarchs. The process of **mummification**, once confined to kings, was now **permitted for ordinary citizens**. In order to preserve it as a permanent home for the spirit, the body was dried in natron salt, its vital organs were removed, and it was stuffed with linen and wrapped in bandages.

40

THE NUMBER OF **DAYS** IT TOOK **TO MUMMIFY** A **BODY**



Charging bull
Minoan rituals included a bull-leaping ceremony, in which athletes grasped the bull's horns and vaulted over its back. This Knossos fresco dates back to c.1500 BCE.

Shang bronze
This bronze plate was found at Erlitou, and is of the Xia period. It is inlaid with turquoise mosaic, believed to represent a dragon's scales.

IN CHINA, THE SHANG CIVILIZATION developed along the **Yellow River** by 1850 BCE. According to legend, China's first dynasty was the Xia, but current archaeological evidence points to **Shang** as the **first dynasty**. At Erlitou in Henan province, archaeologists have uncovered a **palace complex** built on a

20,000

THE NUMBER OF **CLAY TABLETS** SO FAR FOUND AT **MARI**

c.2000 BCE City of **Ashur** becomes dominant in northern **Mesopotamia**

c.2000 BCE Maize, beans, and squashes cultivated in southwestern North America; long-distance trade routes in place

c.2000–1750 BCE **Arctic Small Tools population**, ancestors of the Inuit, spread from Alaska across Canada to settle Greenland

c.2000–1600 BCE **Minoan** civilization of Crete reaches height

c.1985–1955 BCE King Amenemhet I brings stability to Egypt during **Middle Kingdom** period

c.1984 BCE Founding of first dynasty of **Babylon**

1960 BCE **Senwosret I** of Egypt defeats Nubia and extends his kingdom as far as second cataract on Nile

c.1965–1920 BCE Reign of **Senwosret I** of Egypt

c.1900 BCE Towns and small kingdoms developing in **Anatolia**

c.1900 BCE City of **Erlitou** constructed around Yellow River, China

c.1900–1700 BCE **Indus civilization declines**; its cities gradually abandoned

1813–1781 BCE Reign of Shamshi-Adad; conquers northern Mesopotamia to establish **Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia**, with its capital at Shubat-Enlil

KEY
- Area of Shang influence
- Shang city

Shang China
The middle course of the Yellow River was the heartland of the Shang civilization from c.1800–1100 BCE. From here, Shang influence, such as bronze-working, spread elsewhere.

platform of compressed earth. They have also unearthed bronze vessels. Evidence suggests that many features that were to characterize Chinese society later, such as a strong **bureaucracy** and the **worship of ancestors**, date back to this time.

In southern Asia, the **Indus civilization**, which had thrived during the 3rd millennium (see 2500–2350 BCE), went into a **decline** by around 1800 BCE. Scholars believe that this was partly caused by the changes in the regimes of the rivers that provided water for irrigation. Cities seem to have been **ravaged by diseases** such as cholera and malaria. Trade with Mesopotamia also declined. Meanwhile, new crops such as millet and rice were introduced. All these factors seem to have led to a **decline in urban culture**, characterized by writing and a centralized bureaucracy, in favour of a **rural-based culture**.

In South America, large-scale cultivation was taking place along the Pacific coast by about 1800 BCE. Substantial settlements such as **El Paraiso** and **Sechin Alto** in Peru were dominated by **massive temple complexes**. Long-distance trade routes linked coastal towns with communities in Andean valleys to the east and beyond. This allowed for the **spread of pottery** from Colombia to Peru by 1800 BCE. Meanwhile, in North America, crops such as sunflowers and gourds began to be cultivated in the east.

In Western Asia, the fall of the Ur III Empire led to the **rise of** two states – **Assyria** in the north and **Babylon** in the southeast – which were to dominate Mesopotamia for the next 1,500 years. The first dynasty of Babylon was established in *c.*1894 BCE. In the north, the city of **Ashur** became an important trading centre in the 20th century BCE. In 1813 BCE, it was taken over by the Amorite king **Shamshi-Adad**, who **carved out a kingdom** in northern Mesopotamia. This kingdom was a forerunner of the **Greater Assyrian Empire** of the 9th century BCE (see 900–800 BCE).

Clay tablets recovered from Mari in central Mesopotamia hold records of trade and tributes levied by Assyria from vassal-states. Writing from this period included copies of the earliest surviving work of literature, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Sumerian hero
Tablets and stone carvings from the Old Babylonian period provide a record of the Epic of Gilgamesh, *previously passed down in the oral tradition.*

“IF A MAN **PUTS OUT** THE **EYE OF** AN **EQUAL, HIS EYE** SHALL BE **PUT OUT.**”

Law Code of Hammurabi, king of Babylon

WHEN THE ASSYRIAN KING SHAMSHI-ADAD died in 1781 BCE, he was succeeded by his son Ishme-Dagan. During his reign, **Assyria declined**, allowing the state of Babylon to come to the fore. During the reign of Shamshi-Adad, Babylon was probably a vassal state of Assyria, but as Assyria declined, **King Hammurabi** of Babylon saw his chance to seize a wider kingdom. From 1760 BCE, Hammurabi embarked on a series of conquests, which made **Babylon** the **region's foremost state**. Between 1763–1762 BCE, he defeated Elam to the east and Larsa, which controlled Sumer, to the south. Between 1757–1755 BCE, King Hammurabi conquered much of northern Mesopotamia and took the city of Eshnunna after diverting its water supply.

Hammurabi introduced the Babylonian law code in the region under his control. Its 282 laws covered property, family, trade, and business practices. The **Law Code of Hammurabi** is famous for punitive laws which meted out punishments in the same measure as the crime committed – "an eye for an eye". However, it is thought that the law code was more of a moral statement of principle than an enforced judicial system. As such, the code bound the powerful and wealthy as well as ordinary people; the strong were exhorted to refrain from oppressing the weak.

Set in stone
Hammurabi's code was inscribed on stone pillars called stele. This stele shows the god of justice Shamash (right) dictating laws to the king.

c.1800 BCE Shang civilization begins in China

c.1800 BCE Ceremonial centre of **La Florida** built in **Peru**

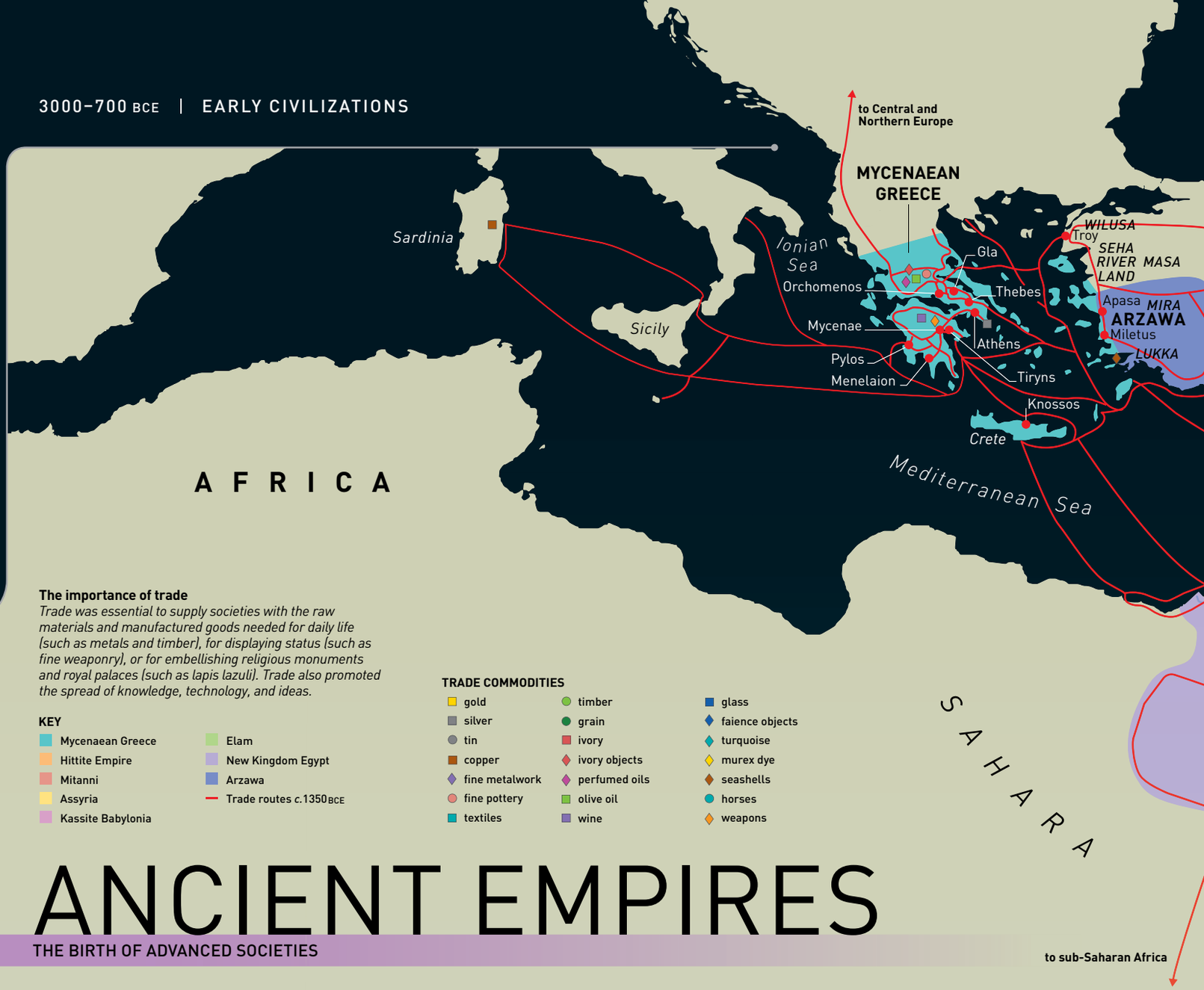
1792–1750 BCE Reign of **Hammurabi** of Babylon; establishes **Babylonian Empire** in Mesopotamia and promulgates a lawcode for use throughout his empire

1766 BCE Traditional date for founding of **Shang dynasty** by King Tang, according to Chinese history

c.1750 BCE Large ceremonial complex of **Sechin Alto** constructed in **Peru**

c.1750 BCE Linear A script comes into use in Crete

c.1725 BCE Middle Kingdom in Egypt torn by unrest; start of **Second Intermediate Period** (to *c.*1540)



The importance of trade
Trade was essential to supply societies with the raw materials and manufactured goods needed for daily life (such as metals and timber), for displaying status (such as fine weaponry), or for embellishing religious monuments and royal palaces (such as lapis lazuli). Trade also promoted the spread of knowledge, technology, and ideas.

KEY
- Mycenaean Greece
- Hittite Empire
- Mitanni
- Assyria
- Kassite Babylonia
- Elam
- New Kingdom Egypt
- Arzawa
- Trade routes *c.*1350 BCE

TRADE COMMODITIES
- gold
- silver
- tin
- copper
- fine metalwork
- fine pottery
- textiles
- timber
- grain
- ivory
- ivory objects
- perfumed oils
- olive oil
- wine
- glass
- faience objects
- turquoise
- murex dye
- seashells
- horses
- weapons

ANCIENT EMPIRES

THE BIRTH OF ADVANCED SOCIETIES

In the 3rd millennium BCE, states emerged in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus. Urban society was consolidated in Western Asia in the 2nd millennium, and powerful states vied for control of lands; in contrast, in South Asia, towns disappeared. Complex societies emerged in China and the Americas.

The exceptional agricultural productivity of the Nile, Euphrates, Indus (see p.24), and Yellow River (see p.29) valleys undoubtedly played a part in the precocious emergence of civilizations in these regions. So did international trade, which was also important in the development of the first New World civilizations. Trade also enabled many neighbouring societies to achieve prosperity: through time they developed complex cultures increasingly focused on urban centres, and came into competition for resources and markets. High-level diplomacy was essential to the smooth operation of international trading networks and to success in inter-state power struggles. Royal letters found in the Egyptian capital, Akhetaten (Amarna), provide a fascinating picture of relations between the 14th-century BCE rulers of the rival great states of the eastern Mediterranean.

> “FOR A **LONG TIME** WE HAVE HAD GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN US **KINGS...**”

Babylonian king Burnaburiash II to Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten, from the Amarna letters, 14th century BCE

THE WORLD PICTURE

Urbanism and complex societies became more widespread during the 2nd millennium BCE. While they shared many features such as trade, high agricultural productivity, dense populations, and their managerial needs, urban societies took many different forms. In the Americas, large ceremonial complexes with residential suburbs provided the focus for the communities of the wider region, strongly connected by shared religion and trade.

Advanced centres
This map shows established and emerging civilizations in the later 2nd millennium BCE. Societies of farmers and hunter-gatherers occupied other regions.

KEY
- Chavín
- Olmec
- Shang
- Mycenaeans
- Egypt
- Babylonia
- Assyria
- Hittites
- Mitanni
- Elam

KINGDOMS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

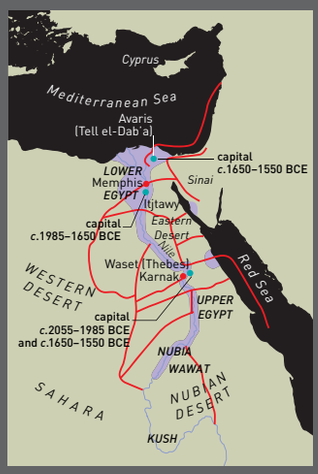
The Nile Valley's exceptional agricultural fertility promoted the early development of urbanism in Egypt. Settlements clung to the Nile Delta and riverbanks, beyond which lay arid desert. The great mineral resources of the flanking desert regions and Nubia, which included gold, were important for both domestic use, and to support international trade.

KEY

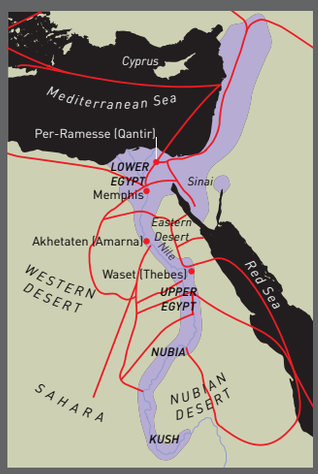
Trade routes — Capital cities

Black Sea
TUMMANNA
PALA
KASKAS
Hattusas
UPPERLAND
HITTITE EMPIRE
APALLA
TARHUNTASSA
KIZZUWATNA
Carchemish
ISUWA
URUADRI (URARTU)
Washshukanni
Harran
MUKISH
Alalah
Aleppo
Ugarit
Emar
MITANNI
Nineveh
Arbil
ASSYRIA
Ashur
Cyprus (Alashiya)
Arwad
NIYA
Tunip
Qatna
Qadesh
Euphrates
Tigris
Simurru
Labwe
Byblos
Kumida
Sidon
Hazor
Tyre
Shechem
Gaza
Jerusalem
Lachish
Sharuhen
Memphis
Akhetaten
EGYPT
Nile
Thebes
Red Sea
to Punt
to Afghanistan
Dur-Kurigalzu
BABYLONIA
Babylon
SEALAND
Nippur
Uruk
Ur
Susa
ELAM
Anshan
Liyan
Persian Gulf
DILMUN
Arabian Peninsula

Old Kingdom *c.*2686–2181 BCE
Rulers exercised centralized control and commanded impressive resources, as shown by the pyramids at Giza.



Middle Kingdom *c.*2040–1640 BCE
Decorated tombs record prosperous life under the stable 12th dynasty, but the state disintegrated under later rulers.



New Kingdom *c.*1550–1069 BCE
Egypt reached its greatest power and prosperity, conquering Nubia and the Levant, and building several temples.

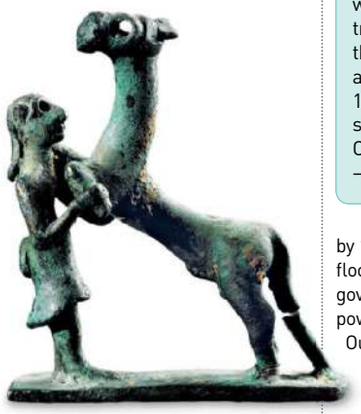
1650–1550 BCE

Hattusas, the Hittite capital, was founded by Hattusalis I in 1650 BCE and destroyed in 1180 BCE.

AFTER HAMMURABI'S DEATH in 1750 BCE, the Babylonian Empire (see 1850–1790 BCE) declined. At the same time, other powers were on the rise, such as the **Hurrians** of Mitanni in Syria, and the **Hittites** of Anatolia in Turkey. By 1650 BCE, the Hittites had built an extensive kingdom in central Anatolia, with its capital at Hattusas. The Hittites had developed advanced bronze- and **iron-working** skills and they were also known to be **fierce fighters**. In 1595 BCE, the Hittite king **Mursilis** (r.1620–1590 BCE) **raided Babylon** and expanded his empire. However, he was killed soon after, and the empire shrank back for about a century.

In Egypt, the **Middle Kingdom** (see 2000–1850 BCE) was **waning** by 1670 BCE, partly due to erratic floods in the Nile. As regional governors became more powerful, **civil war** broke out.

Outsiders soon took advantage of the unrest. The **Nubians** won back lands that the Egyptians had taken earlier (see 2000–1850 BCE). In 1650 BCE, the **Hyksos** from the Levant seized Lower Egypt, but Upper Egypt remained under the control of Egyptian kings.



Man and beast
The Hittite Empire was known for its bronze craftsmanship. Bronze weapons and artefacts fetched a high price. This statuette of a man and a horse was probably a commission.

IRON-WORKING

The Hittites developed iron smelting by *c.*1500 BCE. At first iron was used only in luxury objects, such as in the decoration of this box from Acemhoyek. Later, as technology developed, iron was used to create superior weapons. Though the Hittites traded iron goods, they kept this technology secret for about 300 years. Around 1200 BCE, iron-working spread to Greece, and then to Central Europe by *c.*750 BCE – the dawn of the Iron Age.

1550–1400 BCE

Built over 300 years, the temple complex at Karnak, Egypt, includes the world's largest temple, dedicated to Amun-Re, the patron deity of the pharaohs.

IN *c.*1550 BCE, THE THEBAN KING Ahmose I (r.1550–1525 BCE) **drove** the **Hyksos** from Lower Egypt, ushering in the third period of settled rule in Egypt, known as the **New Kingdom** (*c.*1550–1070 BCE). During this time, **Egyptian rulers** assumed the **title "pharaoh"**, meaning "great house". A succession of warrior kings campaigned to expand Egypt's boundaries once more. **Tuthmosis I** (r.1504–1492 BCE) **drove** the **Nubians** back in the south and recaptured Sinai and parts of Syria and Palestine. Under **Tuthmosis III** (r.1479–1425 BCE), Egypt controlled a strip along the Mediterranean coast and north of the Euphrates (see p.33).

The conquered states paid huge annual tributes to Egypt, a part of which was spent building one of the world's largest **religious sites at Karnak** and the impressive mortuary temple **of Queen Hatshepsut** (r.1473–1458 BCE).

2000
THE NUMBER OF **NAMES** FOR **GODS** AND **GODDESSES** IN **ANCIENT EGYPT**

Egyptian religion was very complex. Every village, town, and district had its own patron deity. In paintings and sculptures, many deities were shown with animal heads, representing their most important attributes. For example, the falcon god Horus protected the king, while the ibis-headed Thoth was the patron god of scribes.

By 1600 BCE, a new civilization emerged on the Greek mainland. Its people are now known as the **Mycenaeans**, after the fortress-palace of Mycenae, believed to be the home of the mythical king Agamemnon from Homer's *Iliad*. However, the Mycenaeans

Mask of gold
German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann found this funerary mask at a grave in Mycenae, and claimed it belonged to King Agamemnon.

c.1650 BCE Hittites establish **Old Kingdom** in **central Anatolia**, with Hattusas as its capital

c.1650–1550 BCE Hyksos of the Levant **conquer Lower Egypt** during Second Intermediate Period

c.1628 BCE A volcano on the Greek island of **Thera erupts** violently, **burying Minoan settlements** on the island with ash

c.1600 BCE Mycenaean civilization emerges on the Greek mainland

c.1595 BCE Hittite king **Mursilis raids Babylon**, ending the empire founded by Hammurabi

c.1570s BCE First Egyptian pharaohs are buried in **Valley of the Kings** near Thebes

c.1570 BCE Kassites of Iran begin creation of new empire in Babylonia, uniting the region

c.1550s BCE Theban king **Ahmose I drives Hyksos** from Lower Egypt to reunite Egypt; **New Kingdom** period **begins**

c.1550 BCE **Hittites** develop **iron-smelting** technology

c.1500 BCE Hittite Old Kingdom **declines**; emergence of **Hurrian** dynasty of Mitanni in northern Mesopotamia

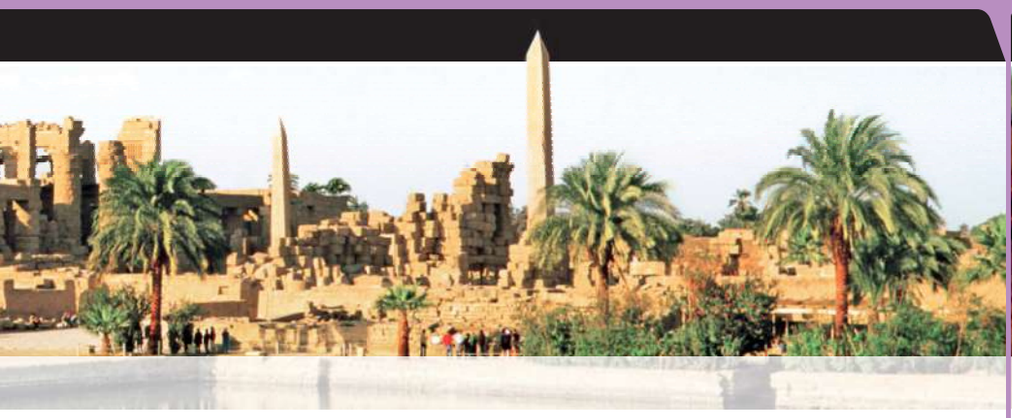
c.1500 BCE Copper worked in the **Sahara** region

c.1500 BCE **Egyptians**, Mitanni, and **New Kingdom Hittites** strive for control of the **Levant**

c.1500 BCE Evidence of **metalworking** in Peru

c.1500s–900 BCE **Aryans** from southern Russia **migrate** to northern **India**

c.1500–1200 BCE **Karnak** temple complex **at Thebes** constructed



Tutankhamun was buried with fabulous treasure. This detail from the pharaoh's throne shows him being anointed by his wife Ankhesenamun.

probably called themselves Ahhiyawa. They had **migrated from** the **Balkans** or Anatolia about 500 years earlier. Their **lands** were a **patchwork of small kingdoms**, each later dominated by a palace-citadel such as the ones at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos. They spread their influence through trade. After the collapse of the Minoan Empire in *c.*1450 BCE, the Mycenaeans took over several sites formerly occupied by the Minoans, including Knossos. After *c.*1400 BCE, they also took over Minoan trade networks and **established settlements** on Rhodes, Kos, and the Anatolian mainland.

The Mycenaeans inherited Minoan arts and crafts, adapting the **Linear A script** to write an early form of Greek known as the **Linear B script**. They were **great traders**, and ventured out to Sicily and Italy. A ship believed to be of Canaanite origin, wrecked off Uluburun on the coast of Turkey, was found to contain tin from Iran or Afghanistan, copper and pottery from Cyprus, ivory and jewellery from Egypt, and Mycenaean swords.

The **late Bronze Age** was a time of **unrest** in **Western Asia**. From 1550–1400 BCE, there was a **struggle between various powers** in the region, including the Hurrians, Hittites, Elamites, Egyptians, and the Kassites. In the 1570s BCE, the Kassites had gained control of Babylon. However, by **1450 BCE**, the **Hittite New Kingdom** was **growing** in **influence**, partly due to an alliance with Egypt. Around this time, the Mitanni dominated Syria, but by the 1400s, the Hittites were fighting for control of the region.

In China, the **Shang civilization** (see 1850–1790 BCE) **flourished** around 1500 BCE, with its rulers dominating a large area of central China. However, the Shang had to regularly fend off threats to their kingdom from nomadic tribes to the north. **Shang capitals** were surrounded by **defensive walls**. Kings and nobles were buried in tombs, which held fabulous grave goods. The Shang capital moved several times during this period. Shang society was believed to be well organized and extremely hierarchical. Writing began around 1900 BCE. Most examples of **early writing** took the form of **oracle bones**, attesting to the Shang rulers' practice of consulting their ancestors on important decisions. Questions concerning the future were inscribed on the bone of an ox or on a turtle shell, which was then struck with a hot metal tool. The way the bone cracked was believed to provide the answer.

Aegean civilizations
Around 1450 BCE Mycenaean influence spread throughout the Aegean, including to several sites that had been part of the Minoan Empire.

KEY
- Mycenaean site
- Mycenaean major palace

IN *c.*1352 BCE, AMENHOTEP IV, a religious reformer, became **Egypt's pharaoh**. He broke with the traditional religion, with its pantheon of gods, and **initiated** the **worship of a single god, Aten**, or sun-disk. He changed his name to Akhenaten, meaning "living spirit of Aten", and founded a **new capital** between Thebes and Memphis. He named it Akhetaten, meaning "horizon of Aten".

Akhenaten's religious reforms were believed to have been unpopular, especially with the influential priestly elite. After his death in *c.*1336 BCE, his son **Tutankhamun** ascended the throne at the age of nine. He restored the old gods and abandoned the new capital. Tutankhamun is believed to have died under mysterious circumstances at 18, and was hastily buried in a minor tomb. It was thought for years that Tutankhamun died of a blow to the head, but the latest evidence suggests he died of blood poisoning after breaking his leg in a chariot crash while out hunting in the desert.

Since the 1570s BCE, Egypt's pharaohs had been buried in rock-cut tombs in the **Valley of the Kings**, on the west bank of the Nile. Rulers hoped their tombs would be safe from robbers, but almost all the **tombs** were **robbed** of their rich goods. However, in 1922, British archaeologist Howard Carter discovered **Tutankhamun's tomb** virtually **intact**. The shrine room had four gilded shrines, holding the king's **coffin and mummy** with a solid gold mask. The other rooms contained jewellery, furniture, golden statues, and musical instruments.

Sun worship
Akhenaten instituted the worship of the sun disk Aten. In this relief carving found at Akhetaten (modern el-Amarna), he is seen worshipping the sun with his wife Nefertiti.

c.1400s BCE Bronze working spreads to Vietnam and Thailand

c.1450 BCE Mycenaean trading network stretches from Sicily to the Levant

c.1400 BCE Shang capital moves from Zhengzhou to Xi'ang in China

c.1300s BCE Hittite king Suppiluliumas I (*c.*1380–1334 BCE) briefly conquers Syria, rivalling Egypt in size

mid-1300s BCE City of Ashur breaks free from Mitannian rule; rise of Assyrian power

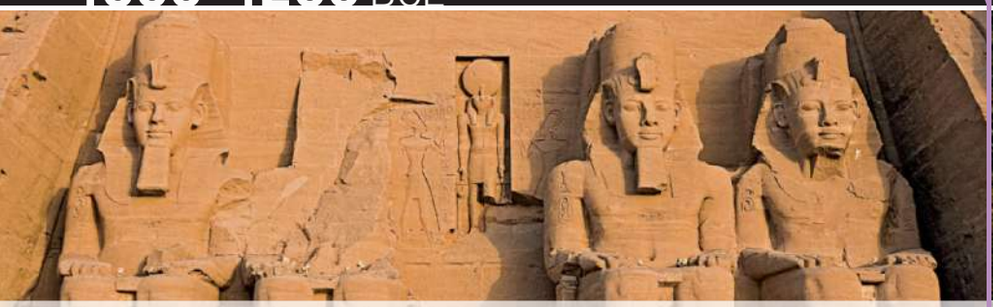
mid-1400s BCE Lapita people migrate eastward from Melanesia to colonize Pacific islands

c.1450 BCE Minoan palaces on Crete destroyed; Mycenaeans take control of the island

c.1352–1336 BCE Reign of Amenhotep IV; breaks with Egypt's old religion to worship the sun-disk Aten and takes the name Akhenaten

c.1336–1327 BCE Brief reign of the boy-king Tutankhamun; old Egyptian religion restored and Akhetaten abandoned

1300–1200 BCE



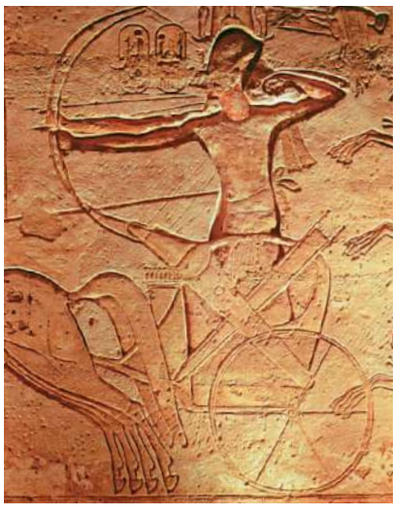
The facade of the temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel features four colossal seated statues of the pharaoh, but the statue second from left has perished.

TOWARDS THE END OF THE 2ND MILLENNIUM BCE, the eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia were a **mosaic of empires**, which comprised Egypt, Babylonia, Elam, Assyria, and the Hittites in Anatolia. Borders fluctuated as each kingdom strove to gain ascendancy over its neighbours through conquest or diplomacy. In war and peace, **vital trade routes**, through which tin and copper for **bronze** reached the region, remained intact.

A frequent flashpoint for conflict was the **Levant** (modern Syria and Lebanon), which Egypt had lost to the Hittites following the reign of Akhenaten (see 1350 BCE). In the 13th century BCE, Pharaoh Seti I and his son **Ramesses II** campaigned to win it back. Ramesses' 67-year reign (r.1279–1213 BCE) was

> "YOU ARE A **GREAT WARRIOR** WITHOUT EQUAL, **VICTORIOUS** IN SIGHT OF THE WHOLE WORLD."
>
> Inscription commemorating the victory of Ramesses II at Qadesh

a time of **stability and prosperity** for Egypt. Through a combination of war, diplomacy, and strategic marriage, Ramesses sought to extend Egyptian influence to Western Asia. In the 1270s BCE, he fought a series of wars with the Hittite king, Muwattalis II, of which the most famous was the **Battle of Qadesh** (*c.*1274 BCE). Although Ramesses claimed victory at Qadesh, the battle is believed to have been inconclusive, and the Hittites held on to the region.



Ancient propaganda
A detail from the temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel shows the king firing an arrow, taking on the Hittite army single-handed at the Battle of Qadesh.

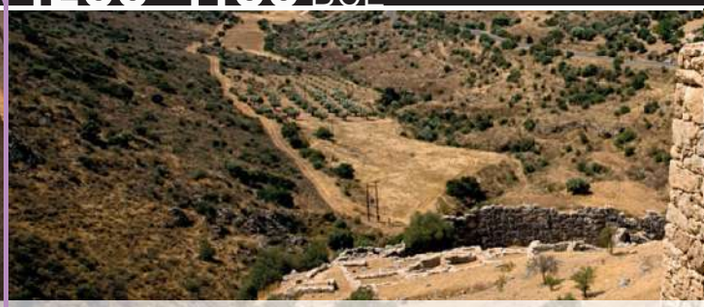
In 1259 BCE, after further campaigns in Syria, Ramesses tried a different tactic, and negotiated a **pioneering peace treaty** with the new Hittite king, **Hattusilis III**. Ramesses also took two Hittite princesses in marriage (he had about seven wives in total). Following the treaty, Ramesses kept up a friendly correspondence with the Hittite ruler, which was recorded on clay tablets in Akkadian cuneiform script.

Ramesses also embarked on an extensive programme of **monument-building**. On Egypt's southern border with Nubia he constructed the magnificent temple of **Abu Simbel**. He founded a new capital at **Per-Ramesses** in Lower Egypt, although Thebes in Upper Egypt remained an important centre. West of Thebes he built a vast mortuary temple, which doubled as a palace, court, and centre of learning.

The late 2nd millennium BCE saw the resurgence of Ashur, in what is now called the **Middle Assyrian Empire** (1350–1000 BCE). Following the death of Shamshi-Adad in 1781 BCE (see 1850 BCE), Ashur had become a vassal, first of Babylon, then of Mitanni. A revival of Ashur's fortunes began under **Ashur-uballit I** (r.1363–1328 BCE), who broke free of Mitannian rule and carved out a kingdom in northern Iraq. His later successors, Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I, continued to gain territory, expanding the kingdom's borders west to conquer eastern Mitanni and briefly, from 1225–1216 BCE, southeast to Babylonia.

In the Aegean, the **Mycenaean** palace-kingdoms of the Greek mainland **continued to thrive.**

1200–1100 BCE



The boulders used to make these walls, now in ruins, at Mycenae on the Greek mainland were so huge, later civilizations believed they were built by giants.

BETWEEN 1250 AND ABOUT 1050 BCE, many of the **powers** that had dominated Western Asia for centuries **went into decline**, and some disappeared altogether. The eastern Mediterranean entered a **time of turmoil**, and many coastal cities were laid waste by unknown invaders – written records of the period give few clues as to their identity. First to succumb were the Hittites, whose capital **Hattusas** was **sacked** and abandoned *c.*1200 BCE. By *c.*1180 BCE, Hittite possessions in the Levant were lost and the **empire fragmented**.

These conflicts were most likely instigated by the waves of migrants known collectively as the **Sea Peoples**. These warlike peoples came from many different areas, including Sicily, Sardinia, Greece, Libya, and Anatolia. Whatever their origins, their movements through the eastern Mediterranean in *c.*1200–1100 BCE led to attacks on Cyprus, Egypt, Anatolia, and Canaan and Syria in the Levant. In 1178 BCE, the Egyptian pharaoh **Ramesses III** drove the Sea Peoples from Lower Egypt, but could not prevent them from colonizing the Levant.

Around 1200 BCE, the **Mycenaean kingdoms** entered a time of upheaval, a result of both internal disintegration and external threats. The defences of many Mycenean palaces were strengthened. Records at Pylos show the inhabitants feared attack from the sea. By 1100 BCE, most of the Mycenaean palaces had been sacked and abandoned. This triggered the so-called **Dark Age of Greece**, when writing fell out of use, not to be reintroduced until the Homeric age (see 800 BCE).

In the late Bronze Age, parts of Europe came to be dominated by the **Urnfield Culture** – named after the practice of cremating the dead and burying the remains in funerary urns, sometimes accompanied by rich grave goods. This culture originated in the **Danube region** in 1300 BCE, and spread to Italy and central and eastern Europe in the following centuries.

Between 1200 and 700 BCE **iron technology** spread northwards from Greece to Central Europe.

> "THEY CAME **BOLDLY SAILING** IN THEIR WARSHIPS FROM THE **MIDST OF THE SEA,** NONE BEING ABLE TO WITHSTAND THEM…"
>
> An inscription by **Ramesses II** (r.1279–1213), referring to the Sea Peoples

c.1300–1000 BCE Farmers and pastoralits spread through the **Ganges Basin** in northern India

c.1300 BCE Urnfield culture emerges in middle Danube region

1279 BCE Start of reign of **Ramesses II** in Egypt (to 1213 BCE)

c.1274 BCE Egyptians and Hittites fight at the **Battle of Qadesh**

c.1200 BCE Chavín culture emerges in the Peruvian Andes

c.1200 BCE Hittite capital of **Hattusas destroyed**

c.1200 BCE Olmec culture emerges in Mexico

c.1200 BCE States in the Levant raided by the **Sea Peoples**

c.1184 BCE Reign of **Ramesses III**, Egypt's last great pharaoh, starts (to 1153 BCE)

c.1180 BCE Hittite Empire collapses

c.1150 BCE Mycenaean defences strengthened, indicating **fear of attack**

> **“ WHEN ALL LONGINGS** THAT ARE IN THE HEART **VANISH,** THEN **A MORTAL BECOMES IMMORTAL... ”**
>
> ***Krishna Yajur Veda***

Iron rapidly replaced bronze in tools and weapons, signalling the end of the **Bronze Age**.

In Mesoamerica, the region's first great civilization, the **Olmec**, was emerging in the lowlands of Mexico's southern Gulf coast. The Olmecs built ceremonial centres, including San Lorenzo, constructed temples and houses on earthen mounds, and carved huge stone heads clad in helmets. They also established long-distance trade routes. Meanwhile, **other cultures** were **emerging**, such as at Cerro Sechin, in what is now Peru.

Stone warrior
Monumental carvings from temples at Cerro Sechin on the Peruvian coast show warriors, torture victims, and human sacrifices.

THE CLOSE OF THE 2ND MILLENIUM SAW MAJOR CHANGES in the power politics of West Asia In 1070 BCE, the Egyptian New Kingdom ended and Egypt entered a time of unrest called the **Third Intermediate Period**, which lasted until 747 BCE (see 800–700 BCE). Historians believe that the power of the pharaohs had been eroded by a priestly elite who had gained control of many areas. By 1000 BCE, all the territories won by New Kingdom pharaohs had been lost.

In **Mesopotamia**, there were **frequent wars** between the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Elamites; the region was also subjected to devastating raids by Aramaean nomads from the west.

Meanwhile, other powers were rising in the region. A Semitic-speaking people, who called themselves **Canaanites**, had inhabited the Levant for centuries, living in city-states that controlled the surrounding territory. They were skilled seafarers and played a major role in international trade. By 1100 BCE, Canaanite port cities such as Arwad, Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon were expanding their operations, establishing trading posts and colonies throughout the eastern Mediterranean. They traded cedarwood from Lebanon, glass- and ivory-ware, metal ores, and most important, an expensive purple dye made from murex shellfish. It was this luxury commodity that caused them to be known by their more familiar Greek name, the **Phoenicians**, after *phoinix*, the Greek for purple.

In China, a new dynasty replaced the Shang in 1027 BCE, when King Wu of the Zhou defeated the last Shang ruler, Di-Xin. The **Zhou dynasty** was to **rule China for 700 years**. This long era is usually divided into two periods: the Western and Eastern Zhou. During the first era the Zhou capital was Zongzhou. This was a **time of prosperity** and strong central control. Zhou territory was divided into fiefs held by trusted noblemen, in return for military allegiance. But many aspects of Chinese tradition already present in the Shang period continued in the Zhou, including ancestor worship and the use of oracle bones for divination.

Meanwhile in Japan, the **Jomon culture**, named after the cord patterns (*jomon*) that decorate its pottery, continued. The Jomon people were still hunter-gatherers, albeit prosperous and sedentary.

In northern India, small groups of nomadic pastoralists had been migrating into the **Ganges basin** from Central Asia since the 1500s BCE. By the 1100s BCE, most had begun to **settle and cultivate crops**. They spoke **Sanskrit**, which became the language of early Indian sacred writings. Sanskrit, an Indo-European language related to Iranian and almost all European languages, is also the ancestor of modern languages such as Hindi and Urdu.

Sacred writings called **the Vedas** were transmitted orally in Sanskrit for many centuries. Although the Vedas are largely religious writings and hymns, the geographical information that they contain not only describes the gradual spread of farmers and pastoralists from the Punjab to the Ganges basin, but also gives some information about conflicts with other groups, and local life at the time. For example, the **division of society** into **varnas** or **castes** is described in the Vedas, first appearing in Book X of *Rigveda*, although there is nothing in the text to suggest that the system was hereditary at the time.

Mark of a culture
In this example of late-Jomon pottery, the bowl and stand bear the distinctive rope patterns that give the Jomon period its name.

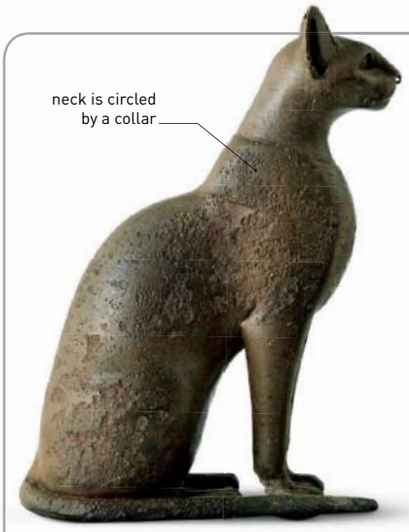
c.1100 BCE Mycenaean period ends and **Dark Age of Greece** begins

1069 BCE Start of **Third Intermediate Period** in Egypt

1027 BCE King Wu claims Shang king has forfeited **Mandate of Heaven** to rule

1006 BCE David succeeds Saul as **King of the Hebrews** (Israelites)

c.1000 BCE Phoenicians establish colonies and ports around the Mediterranean



Cat figurine
*c.*600 BCE
This copper alloy figurine sits on a wooden base. Cats were linked with the goddess Bastet, who protected the pharaoh. A hole through the nose originally held a ring.

Statue with stele
*c.*1360 BCE
A carved figure representing a high-priest of Amun holds a stele, or carved slab. These slabs were used as grave or commemorative markers. The inscription is a hymn to the Sun god and lists local dignitaries.

Decorated box of Perpauty
*c.*1370 BCE
This sycamore box belonging to a man called Perpauty may have held linen. All four sides are painted with scenes. This side shows Perpauty and his wife being offered gifts by their son and three daughters.

Duck-shaped flask
*c.*1700 BCE
This jar is carved in the shape of a duck, which appears to be trussed and plucked. It probably held cosmetic paste, such as eye-paint, which was likely removed and applied using a stopper-cum-applicator, now lost.

ANCIENT EGYPT

A REMARKABLE CIVILIZATION REVEALED THROUGH EVERYDAY ITEMS AND TREASURES

Artefacts manufactured over some 2,000 years bear witness to the skills of Egyptian craft workers. They also reflect Egypt's wealth and its trade network, through which ebony, lapis lazuli, and turquoise were imported.

Many of the objects shown here were used in daily life by well-to-do Egyptians. They reflect belief in the afterlife and the practice of burying possessions that it was believed would be used by the dead person's spirit in the afterlife. The ruling classes were buried with great wealth, but almost all of their tombs were stripped of their riches either in antiquity or more recently.

Funerary mask
*c.*1500 BCE
This mask would have been placed over the head of a mummy. The Egyptians mummified bodies because the deceased spirit could not survive unless there was a body for it to return to.

Shabtis
1292–1190 BCE
Statuettes of servant-figures called shabtis were commonly placed in tombs. The Egyptians believed they would come alive to serve the dead person's spirit in the life to come.

Mummiform shabti
*c.*1300 BCE
This large shabti figure has been carved from wood. The tools the figure carries are traditional symbols of kingship, while the scarab represents the god Khepri.

Mummified jackal or dog
*c.*600 BCE
Jackals and, from the 8th century BCE onwards, also dogs were mummified in honour of the jackal-headed god Anubis, who presided over funerals and embalmings.

Necklaces
*c.*1550–1069 BCE
Egyptian craftsmen had access to many semi-precious stones and precious metals. Necklaces were worn in daily life and also buried with the dead.

Ear studs and earring
*c.*1550–1069 BCE
Once the basic shapes for these studs and earring were made, strands of glass in a contrasting colour were wound around them. The studs required large perforations in the wearer's lobes.

Wooden comb
*c.*300 BCE
This double-sided comb has a row of longer and shorter teeth. Many Egyptians had short hair and wore wigs. Combs were used to keep both natural hair and wigs tidy.

Mirror handle
*c.*1360 BCE
This hardwood mirror setting originally held a polished bronze mirror disc. The handle is carved in the shape of a papyrus column topped with the god Bes – a popular deity.

Cosmetic spoon
*c.*1360 BCE
This spoon for cosmetic paste has been carved from schist in the shape of an ibex, with its head bent over its back, so that its straight horns touch the bowl.

Amulet
912–343 BCE
The wedjat eye symbolizes the eye of the god Horus. This charm was placed on mummies to protect the dead person's spirit in the afterlife. It also symbolized regeneration.

Scarab pectoral
*c.*1361–52 BCE
This magnificent chest ornament represents the scarab god Khepri rolling the red sun-disk. It was found in the tomb of King Tutankhamun.

Male figure amulet
*c.*2200 BCE
This golden charm shows a kneeling male god clasping two palm ribs. He is probably the god Heh, who symbolized eternity. The palm ribs are notched, representing years.

Frog amulets
*c.*1360 BCE
Frogs were a symbol of life and fertility. Women wore frog amulets for luck. These charms are made of blue faience (pottery) with details picked out in gold.

Winged scarab
644–322 BCE
Scarabs were common lucky charms. The scarab beetle was a symbol for rebirth and was worn as jewellery in ancient Egypt.

1000–900 BCE

In the mid-10th century BCE, during the reign of King Solomon, Megiddo (in modern Israel) was an important Israelite fortress and administrative centre.

IN THE 10TH CENTURY BCE, THE PERIOD OF DECLINE in the major powers of Western Asia continued. Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria had weakened, enabling the rise of the short-lived but historically significant **Kingdom of Israel**. The Israelites were Semitic-speaking pastoralists who, according to the Bible, migrated into the land of Canaan in the 1200s BCE. There, they came into conflict with the local Philistines and Canaanites. Around 1000 BCE **King David** (r.1006–965 BCE) **united the Israelite tribes**, and established his capital at **Jerusalem**. David's son **Solomon** (r.*c.*965–928 BCE) increased Israelite territory and built a magnificent palace and temple in the capital, but on his death the kingdom split in two. Eventually Israel and, later, Judah became part of the Assyrian Empire.

Meanwhile, **Assyria** began to re-emerge as a **major power in Mesopotamia**. King Ashur-dan II (r.934–912 BCE) boosted agriculture, bringing prosperity. His successor Adad-nirari II increased Assyria's territory, regaining lands that had been held by the Middle Assyrian Empire in the 13th century BCE.

Etched in gold
This golden plaque showing the protective wedjat *eye symbol dates from the reign of Psusennes I of the 21st dynasty, when Egypt was divided.*

SHALMANESER III (858–824 BCE)

In the 9th century BCE, King Shalmaneser III of Assyria greatly expanded his empire, with campaigns against Mesopotamian tribes, Israel and Judah, Syria, Urartu, and Anatolia. This black limestone obelisk commemorates his deeds and those of his commander-in-chief, Dayyan-Assur. It details, in cuneiform, the enforced tributes paid by the people he conquered.

900–800 BCE

The jaguar featured in many Mesoamerican and South American religions. Here it is depicted in a stone carving from Chavín de Huántar.

THE OLMEC CULTURE CONTINUED TO DEVELOP IN MESOAMERICA in the 9th century BCE. After San Lorenzo was destroyed in *c.*900 BCE, **La Venta** to the northeast became the **main Olmec centre**. This larger settlement was dominated by a 34m (111ft) high pyramid, the forerunner of Mayan temples. The Olmecs also devised a script of **glyphs** – the first in the region. Their influence spread across Mesoamerica, impacting on other cultures that were starting to emerge at this time – the **Zapotecs** and the **Maya**.

In eastern North America, the **Adena culture** was developing in the Ohio Valley. It was characterized by ritual earthworks and burial mounds containing objects of fine craftsmanship.

Far to the south, the **Chavín culture** had appeared in the Peruvian Andes by *c.*1200 BCE and spread to the coast. The Chavín were **skilled engineers** and **architects** who built canals and levelled slopes for farming and construction. The main settlement, **Chavín de Huántar**, was high in the Andes, and seems to have been a pilgrimage centre for a cult of supernatural beings that were part-human, part-animal. The main god, the "Staff God", is usually depicted with fangs.

In **Europe**, **iron** was gradually **replacing bronze** as the metal of choice for tools and weapons. The area around **Hallstatt** in Austria became a centre for an early Iron Age culture which developed from the Urnfield culture (see 1200 BCE). Hallstatt chieftains dominated local salt-mining and iron working. They lived in hilltop forts and were buried with rich grave goods.

During the 9th century BCE, the **Phoenicians** were becoming a major power in the Mediterranean. Their trading ships, previously confined to the eastern sea, now plied the western Mediterranean. Colonies were set up in Cadiz, in Spain, on the Balearic Islands, and, most notably, on the North African coast at Carthage (in modern Tunisia). Through this trading network, the Phoenician **alphabet** became known throughout the Mediterranean.

In Western Asia, the **Neo-Assyrian Empire** began to expand, and, one by one, Israel, Judah, and the small states of nearby Syria and Phoenicia were brought under Assyrian control.

Grave goods
This Iron Age brooch was discovered in a grave at Hallstatt in Austria. The type of jewellery found suggests that a woman was buried there.

Mediterranean region
This map of the Mediterranean region in the 8th century BCE shows the colonies established by the dominant civilizations of the period, including the Phoenicians and Greeks.

c.1000 BCE Greeks begin to found colonies in the Aegean

c.1000 BCE Hilltop forts built in western Europe

c.1000 BCE King David unites the Israelite tribes, and makes Jerusalem his capital

c.1000 BCE Farming communities settled in Ganges valley, India

c.1000 BCE Nubian kingdom of Kush founded

c.1000 BCE Adena culture starts to develop along Ohio River in North America

966 BCE Neo-Assyrian Empire founded

965 BCE Start of King Solomon's reign in Israel (to 928 BCE)

900–700 BCE Scythian nomads spread across the steppe

880 BCE Nimrud becomes capital of Assyria

853 BCE Shalmaneser III wins Battle of Qarqar against coalition led by king of Damascus

c.850 BCE Earliest settlement built on the site of Rome in Italy

c.840 BCE Armenian kingdom of Urartu becomes powerful

814 BCE Carthage founded in North Africa by the Phoenicians

c.800 BCE Hallstatt culture appears in Europe

c.800 BCE Chavín de Huántar founded

In 705 BCE, the Assyrian capital moved to Nineveh. This stone relief shows the Assyrian king and his queen feasting in the gardens of the royal palace there.

ASSYRIA CONTINUED ITS POLICY OF AGGRESSION through the 8th century BCE, conquering rival states in Western Asia and reducing them to provinces. Assyrian success was based on a **disciplined**, technically advanced **army** and an **efficient bureaucracy**. Conquered peoples had to pay costly tributes, and revolts were ruthlessly crushed. Particularly troublesome nations suffered forced deportations – large numbers of people were resettled in Assyria.

Following a period of weak rule in the first half of the 8th century BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III (r.744–727 BCE) recouped Assyria's losses. His successor **Sargon II** (r.722–704 BCE) campaigned in Iran and Anatolia, conquering Babylon and, in 714 BCE, defeating the Armenian state of Urartu. He also defeated the Israelites and transported the "ten lost tribes" of Israel to northern Mesopotamia.

Ritual container
Zhou smiths were highly skilled metal-workers. This bronze bowl dates from the 8th century BCE, the time of the Eastern Zhou dynasty.

In **China**, the Zhou capital moved east to Luoyang in 770 BCE, marking the start of the earlier part of the **Eastern Zhou era**, which lasted until about 480 BCE (see 500 BCE). Royal control had weakened, as the lords who held large fiefdoms had grown more powerful. Now central control disintegrated, and **rival warlords** fought one another. Despite the chaos, this era was a time of technical and cultural advancement. Iron tools increased efficiency in agriculture and food production. Populations and cities grew, and **philosophy**, **the arts**, and **literature** began to **develop**.

In Egypt, the unrest of the Third Intermediate Period continued. Since 850 BCE, the country had been embroiled in a destructive civil war, and was now divided into small states. In the 8th century BCE, the Kushite ruler of Nubia to the south, **Piye** (r.747–716 BCE), **conquered** both Upper and Lower **Egypt**, and united them under **Kushite rule**.

In the Mediterranean, Phoenician influence continued to spread, as the city of **Carthage** in North Africa **grew powerful**. Greece, meanwhile, was starting to emerge from the Dark Age that had followed the Mycenaeans' downfall. City-states or ***poleis*** were forming on the Greek mainland, centred on hilltop citadels. To increase their territory, the *poleis* founded colonies around the shores of the Aegean. Although rivalry between cities was often intense, a **distinct Greek identity and culture** was emerging. All Greeks were identified as "Hellenes". In 776 BCE the first pan-Hellenic games were held in honour of Zeus at **Olympia**. By the mid-700s BCE the Greeks had adapted the Phoenician alphabet for their own language, and not long after, Homer's epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* – hitherto transmitted orally – were probably written down.

Kushite statue
This alabaster statue dates from the period of Kushite rule in Egypt. Amenirdis I, sister of Shabaka (r.c.716–702 BCE), is shown holding a flail – a traditional symbol of Egyptian rule.

In the 8th century BCE, **central Italy** was a mosaic of small states ruled by the dominant **Etruscans** – Italy's first indigenous civilization – and Italic tribes such as the Latins, Umbrians, and Sabines. **Rome** is thought to have been founded by the Latin chief **Romulus** in 753 BCE. In its early days, the city, built on seven hills, was ruled by various peoples, including the Etruscans, Latins, and Sabines.

Twin discovery
This painting by Charles de La Fosse depicts the legend of Romulus and Remus, who were abandoned as babies and suckled by a she-wolf, before being rescued by shepherds.

> "SUCH A GREAT TASK IT WAS TO FOUND THE ROMAN RACE."
>
> **Virgil**, from *Aeneid* 1:33

776 BCE First pan-Hellenic **games** held at **Olympia** in Greece, and every four years thereafter

c.775 BCE Start of **Greek colonization of Mediterranean**

771 BCE Zhou capital moves east to **Luoyang**, marking beginning of **Eastern Zhou** period

753 BCE Traditional date for **founding of Rome** by **Romulus**

c.750 BCE **Homer's** *Iliad* and *Odyssey* written down

c.750 BCE **Kushite** rulers of Nubia send armies into **Egypt**, **conquering** it by 747 BCE

c.744 BCE **Tiglath-Pileser III** of Assyria's reign begins (to 727 BCE)

714 BCE Sargon II defeats Urartu and sacks its major sacred site of Musasir

c.722 BCE **Sargon II** takes Assyrian throne (to 705 BCE)

705 BCE Assyrian capital moves to **Nineveh**

701 BCE Assyrians invade **Judaea**

3

THE CLASSICAL AGE

700 BCE–599 CE

This period saw the emergence of complex civilizations. Communities flourished and trade developed in the fertile valleys of Egypt, India, western Asia, and China. Europe, and Central and South America also flourished during this time.

700–676 BCE

> **“HE EVERYWHERE SOUGHT EXCUSES FOR STIRRING UP WAR.”**

Livy, from *Histories* book I, xxi, on Tullus Hostilius, third King of Rome

IN CHINA, THE CITY OF LUOYANG HAD FALLEN TO THE SHEN in 771 BCE, and the Western Zhou capital was transferred east to Chengzhou. From there, the Eastern Zhou dynasty presided over the **fragmentation of China** into as many as 148 states. From around 700 BCE the Zhou were ruled by puppet-emperors, while real power lay with the **ba** (“senior one”) among nearby states. Under **Qi Huan Gong** (r.685–643 BCE) the state of Qi had supremacy. After Huan Gong’s death the **competition for power** between his five sons weakened Qi, and **Jin Wen Gong** (r.685–643 BCE), the ruler of Jin, rose to become ba. By the end of the century, power in China alternated between the **states of Qi, Jin, Qin, and Chu**.

Nubian Pharoah
Taharqa ruled Egypt for 19 years before an Assyrian invasion forced him to return to Nubia in 671 BCE.

7 THE NUMBER OF KINGS OF ROME

In Italy, the **city-state of Rome** was beginning to acquire an urban heart, and the **first forum** was constructed. The second king of Rome, **Numa Pompilius** (r.716–674 BCE) is believed to have established the main Roman priesthoods and a calendar.

In the Near East, the **Assyrians continued their expansion**, confronting Egypt, whose intermittent support for rebels against Assyrian rule in Syria had long been a source of tension. In 671 BCE, the Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon invaded, **capturing the Egyptian royal capital** of Memphis. However, Assyrian control over Egypt was weak, and the Nubian pharaoh **Taharqa** drove the invaders out.

The **Etruscans** expanded southwards from modern Tuscany and Umbria around 700 BCE. Their language remains undeciphered, but lavish tombs indicate a **rich material culture**. During their expansion, the Etruscans founded cities such as Capua, but came into **conflict** with Greek colonies and with Rome. Although more powerful at first, the Etruscans were **politically disunited**, and a **long series of wars** with the Romans turned against them.

675–651 BCE

Pyramids from the cemetery at Nuri, Sudan, which was the burial site of the Napatan and Meroitic kings from around 650 BCE.

IT TOOK A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BY ASHURBANIPAL (r.668–627 BCE) in 664–663 BCE to defeat the Egyptians who had rebelled against Assyrian rule, and to push Assyrian control as far south as Thebes (modern Luxor). This was not the last rebellion against the Assyrians – only ten years later, the vassal king of Saïs, **Psammetichus I** (r.664–610 BCE), revolted against his Assyrian masters, driving them out and founding the 26th Dynasty, under which **Egypt’s independence was restored**. After the final collapse of Assyrian power, in 609 BCE, Egypt was able to establish a foothold in Palestine under **Pharaoh Necho II** (610–595 BCE).

In Greece, the **rise** to pre-eminence of a number of **city states** began, notably **Athens**, **Sparta**, and **Corinth**. In Corinth, a new type of ruler, the “tyrant”, emerged with the overthrow of the Bacchiadae kings in 658 BCE.

> **“TAHARQA THE GODLESS CAME OUT TO TAKE EGYPT.”**

Ashurbanipal’s account of the conquest of Egypt, 664 BCE

The new ruler, **Cypselus** (reign *c.*657–627 BCE) relied on force of personality rather than divine sanction, and established a dynasty under whom Corinth enjoyed a **seven-decade period of dominance**, creating colonies throughout the western Mediterranean.

On the fringes of the Greek world, in western Asia Minor, the **kingdom of Lydia** was increasing in power under **Gyges** (685–647 BCE), its first great king. He allied with Ashurbanipal of Assyria to see off a joint threat to their two lands by Cimmerian raiders in 668–665 BCE, but then assisted Psammetichus I of Egypt in his revolt against the Assyrians. He also adopted an aggressive stance towards his neighbours, the Ionian Greeks of Miletus and Smyrna.

According to Japanese tradition, the first emperor, **Jimmu Tenno**, a descendant of the sun goddess **Amaterasu**, ascended to the throne in 660 BCE. The stories of his migration from southern Honshu eastwards to establish his kingdom near Nara are legendary, but may echo real events of the Japanese **Yayoi** period after 100 BCE, when tribal chieftains began to **consolidate their territories**.

The third king of Rome, **Tullus Hostilius** (r.673–642 BCE) was more martially inclined than his precedessor Numa Pompilius, and

ASHURBANIPAL (r.668–627 BCE)

Ashurbanipal initially shared rule over Assyria with his brother, Shamash-shuma-ukin. After defeating his brother’s revolt in 648 BCE he greatly expanded the Assyrian domains. As well as annexing Egypt, he attacked Elam, sacking its capital, Susa, in 647 BCE. His latter years saw none of the military successes of his early reign. At his death a dispute between his two sons further weakened the Assyrian Empire.

30,000 THE NUMBER OF CLAY TABLETS UNCOVERED IN ASHURBANIPAL’S LIBRARY

c.700 BCE Nomadic **Scythians** begin to establish **permanent settlements** on the western steppes

c.700 BCE Earliest **inscriptions in Etruscan**

700 BCE Sennacherib of Assyria **besieges Jerusalem**, but then returns to Assyria to put down a revolt

c.700 BCE **Archaic Period** begins in **Greece**

700 BCE **Adena culture** begins to flourish in upper Ohio Valley

689 BCE **Babylon destroyed** by Assyrian king, **Sennacherib**

689 BCE Nubian king **Taharqa** becomes Pharoah of Egypt, founding the 25th dynasty

681 BCE **Sennacherib** of Assyria **assasinated** and Esrhaddon becomes ruler

674 BCE **Tulius Hostilius** becomes third king of Rome

671 BCE Assyrian king **Esarhaddon captures** the Egyptian capital **Memphis**

c.670 BCE **Iron-working** introduced into **Egypt**

670 BCE **Gyges** comes to the throne of **Lydia**

669 BCE Pharoah **Taharqa** reoccupies Memphis

668 BCE Assyrian king **Ashurbanipal** expels Taharka from Memphis, re-establishing Assyrian government in Egypt

663 BCE Assyrians **sack Thebes** in Egypt; their empire reaches its greatest extent

663 BCE **Egypt regains independence** from the Assyrians under the 26th dynasty

c.660 BCE Jimmu, the **first emperor** of Japan is born

660 BCE Earliest recorded **naval battle** between Greek city-states

652 BCE Lydian capital **Sardis sacked** by the Cimmerians

650–601 BCE

A lion frieze from the Processional Way in Babylon, which was built around 600 BCE and ran through the heart of the city to the Ishtar Gate.

The Assyrian Empire
From its core around Assur and Nineveh, the Assyrian empire grew to encompass Babylonia, Media, Elam, Urartu, Syria, and Egypt.

led the war against neighbouring Alba Longa, which ultimately led to that city's destruction and the deportation of its population to Rome, in the **first major Roman expansion**. The fourth king, **Ancus Marcius** (641–617 BCE), expanded Roman territory towards the coast, and founded Rome's great port of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber. His successor, **Tarquinius Priscus** (616–578 BCE) was the fifth king of Rome and one of the city's greatest kings. He came from an Etruscan background, a sign of the high level of Etruscan influence over the early city of Rome. Tarquinius Priscus won a series of victories over the Sabines, the Latins, and the Etruscans, who all competed with Rome for dominance over central Italy. He is also said to have established the public games in Rome.

THE ASSYRIANS HAD FINALLY CONQUERED BABYLON in 691 BCE, partially destroying the city. Reconstruction work began under Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), and by 652 BCE Babylon had recovered its importance and became the centre for a **major revolt** led by Shamash-shuma-ukin against his younger brother Ashurbanipal. It took **four years of war** to suppress the Babylonians and their Elamite allies, and the fighting drained Assyria's ability to hold on to its empire. By 630 BCE, Assyria had lost Egypt and Palestine, and in 626 BCE the **Babylonians regained their independence**. By 616 BCE Babylon was strong enough to invade Assyria, aided by the Medes (whose base was in northwestern Iran). In 612 BCE the Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians sacked the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. The **Assyrian empire crumbled**.

A remnant of the Assyrian army regrouped and established a small kingdom around Harran, but by 609 BCE this, too, had fallen.

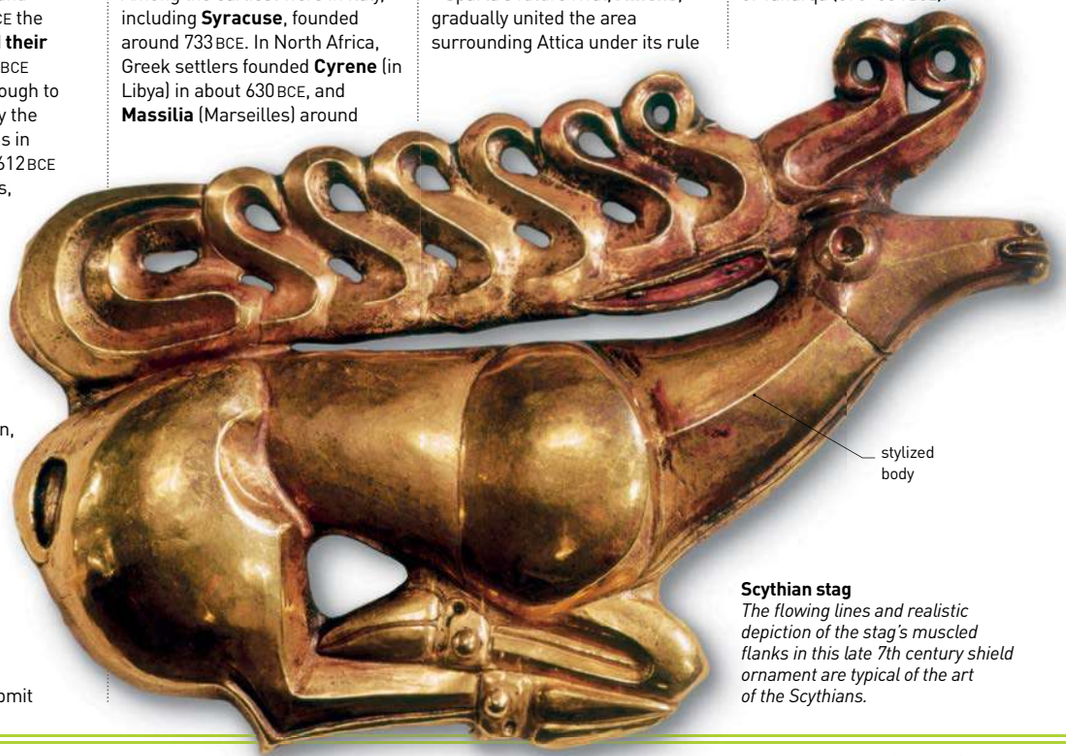
The **Scythians** formed part of a culture of **nomadic horsemen** which held a large territory on the steppes north of the Caucasus from around 800 BCE. In 652 BCE they forced the Medes to submit to them and the Scythian King Bartatua was even sufficiently influential to be given an Assyrian princess as his wife. The **alliance with Assyria** survived into the reign of his son Madyes, but around 615 BCE the Scythians switched sides and played a **key role in Assyria's destruction**. Their Median subjects soon turned on them and around 590 BCE the Scythians retreated north.

In the Greek world, there was a growing movement to **establish colonies** in the Mediterranean. Among the earliest were in Italy, including **Syracuse**, founded around 733 BCE. In North Africa, Greek settlers founded **Cyrene** (in Libya) in about 630 BCE, and **Massilia** (Marseilles) around 600 BCE. New cities were established as far west as Spain, and around the Black Sea coast.

In Greece itself, the **city-state of Sparta** was establishing its dominance in the Peloponnese. A defeat by the city-state of Argos, in 669 BCE, was followed by military reforms and victory against the Messenians (660–650 BCE). By 600 BCE, **Sparta had conquered** almost all the southern Peloponnese and established a stratified social system.

Sparta's future rival, **Athens**, gradually united the area surrounding Attica under its rule in the 8th century BCE. The hereditary monarchy was replaced by nine "archons", chosen annually. Shortly after a damaging popular uprising by Cylon in 632 BCE, Athens received its first law code, drafted by Draco in 621 BCE. The **Draconian law** was later known for the severity of the punishments it prescribed.

To the south of Egypt the **state of Napata** became a power of the first order, conquering Egypt under Piankhy (751–716 BCE) and controlling it under after the death of Taharqa (690–664 BCE).



Scythian stag
The flowing lines and realistic depiction of the stag's muscled flanks in this late 7th century shield ornament are typical of the art of the Scythians.

652 BCE Babylonian rebellion threatens Assyrian rule, but is put down (ends 649 BCE)

c.650 BCE Age of "**tyrants**" begins in many Greek states

c.650 BCE Iron technology reaches **Zhou China**

650 BCE First coins minted in **Lydia**

650 BCE Meroe founded (in modern Sudan)

647 BCE Ashurbanipal **sacks Susa**

630 BCE Sparta wages **war** against the **Messenians**

630 BCE Greek colony of **Cyrene founded** (in modern Libya)

626 BCE Nabopolassar becomes ruler of Babylon, founding Neo-Babylonian dynasty

621 BCE First Athenian law code, **Code of Draco**

648 BCE Babylon surrenders to Ashurbanipal

631 BCE Ashurbanipal dies

625 BCE Periander takes power as tyrant in Corinth

616 BCE Tarquin, an Etruscan, becomes **king of Rome**

620 BCE Foundation of Greek colony of **Tartessus** in Spain

612 BCE Assyrian empire collapses in face of attacks from Medes and Babylonians

615 BCE The **Medes**, an emerging power, **defeat** the **Scythians**

608 BCE Necho II of Egypt **invades Judah**

609 BCE Residual Assyrian state, **Harran**, captured by Babylonians and Medes; Assyrian state disappears forever

604 BCE Traditional date for the birth of **Lao Tzu**, the founder of **Taoism**

605 BCE Nebuchadnezzar II succeeds to the throne of Babylon

600–551 BCE

A medieval view of the city of Jerusalem, which was captured by the Babylonians in 597 BCE. It was taken again, and largely destroyed, 10 years later. After both sieges many of its inhabitants were deported to Babylon.

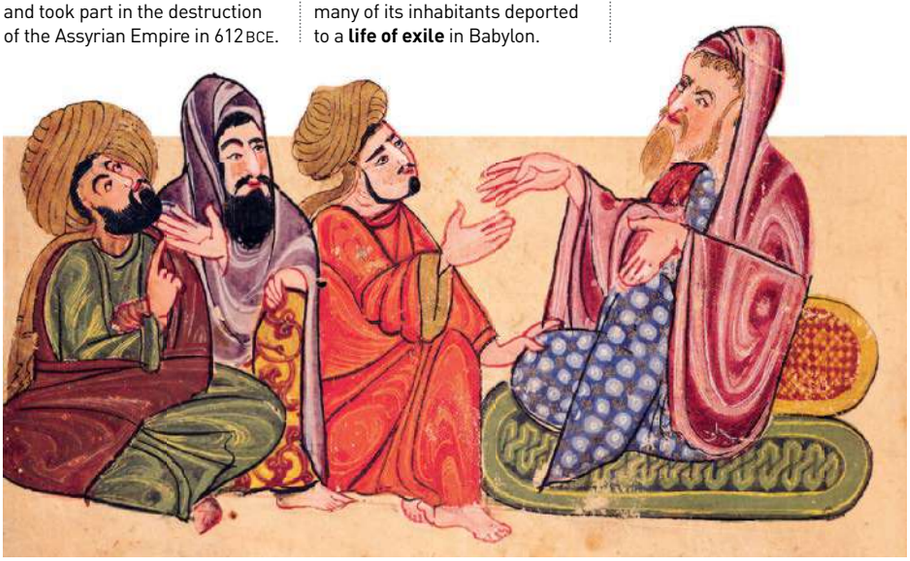
HAVING HELPED DESTROY THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, Nabopolassar (r.626–605 BCE), first king of the **neo-Babylonian dynasty**, embellished the city of Babylon. His son Nebuchadnezzar (r.605–562 BCE) defeated the Egyptians in 605 BCE, repaired Babylon's main ziggurat, and ordered the building of the famous "Hanging Gardens". The last neo-Babylonian king, **Nabonidus** (r.556–539 BCE), moved his royal court to the Arabian oasis of Tema, but **discontent rose** among the Babylonians during his reign.

The Medes of northwest Persia (Iran), consolidated their kingdom under **Cyaxares** (r.624–585 BCE) and took part in the destruction of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BCE. Under the last Median king, Astyages (r.584–549 BCE), Median armies campaigned in Azerbaijan and controlled land as far west as Lydia (Turkey). But by the 550s BCE, Media was under pressure from the Babylonians to the south and the new power of Persia.

The kingdom of Judah had long acted as a block to Assyrian and Babylonian expansion to the west. In **597 BCE**, Nebuchadnezzar **took Jerusalem** and deposed King Jehoiakim. The king they installed in his place, Zedekiah, turned against the Babylonians, and in **587 BCE** there was **another siege**. Much of the city was burnt, the Jewish Temple destroyed, and many of its inhabitants deported to a **life of exile** in Babylon.

The powerful city-state of **Athens** experienced reforms under **Solon** about 600 BCE, notably a **law code** that protected the property rights of the poor, forbade debt-slavery, and moderated the more extreme parts of the **Draconian laws** (see 650-601). Around 560 BCE, Pisistratus seized power and began to rule as a **tyrant** (dictator). Driven out once, he returned in 547 BCE and established a stable regime.

The **Greek city** of Miletus saw the beginnings of **philosophical thought** from about 600 BCE. Thales (born *c.*624 BCE) tried to understand the basic nature of the universe and thought its fundamental element was water.



Lawgiver and reformer
This image shows the Greek statesmen and lawgiver Solon teaching. His reforms began to undermine the power of the aristocracy in Athens.

550–501 BCE

Central Asia became a stronghold of Buddhist beliefs. These cave paintings at Dunhuang in China illustrate a variety of Buddhist parables.

CYRUS, RULER OF THE SMALL KINGDOM OF PERSIS (also called Pars) in the west of Persia (Iran), **revolted** against his Median overlords in **559 BCE**. By 550 BCE he had conquered the Median capital of Ecbatana and overthrown their ruler, King Astyages. Afraid of the **increasing power of Persia**, the Lydians under **King Croesus** opposed Cyrus, but he struck west and in 547 BCE, on the River Halys, defeated the Lydian army and annexed western Asia Minor.

In 539 BCE **Cyrus captured Babylon**, acquiring most of Mesopotamia and making the **Persian Empire** the greatest in the Middle East. **Cyrus died in** 530 BCE while fighting in what is today Turkmenistan, and was succeeded by his son **Cambyses**.

In 526 BCE Cambyses sent his **armies south into Egypt**. The Pharaoh Amasis had just died and his successor Psammetichus III was not well established. Cambyses defeated the Egyptian army at Pelusium in 525 BCE and then **captured the royal capital at Memphis**. He installed himself as the pharaoh and then subdued south Egypt. Persian rule in Egypt lasted until 402 BCE.

Darius the Great
King Darius is shown enthroned and bearing symbols of power in this frieze. His son Xerxes succeeded him.

Cambyses died in 522 BCE and after the brief rebellion of Bardiya, who was either the younger brother of Cambyses or someone impersonating him, **Darius**, a Persian noble, took over as king. Widespread revolts broke out, including in Media, but Darius put them all down. He then **expanded the Persian Empire** by annexing lands in central Asia and on the borders of India from 519 to 515 BCE. In **India**, the political power had coalesced around the **Mahajapanadas**, a group of around 16 powerful

> "I HAVE **FOUGHT 19** BATTLES IN **ONE YEAR**… I HAVE **WON** THEM."
>
> The Behistun inscription of **Darius**

600 BCE Iron-working in Nok region, **West Africa**
600 BCE First **Greek coins issued** in Ionia
600 BCE **Olmec culture** of **Mexico** still flourishing
594 BCE **Solon** becomes archon (ruler) of Athens
590 BCE First **drainage system** is built in Rome
578 BCE Servius Tullius becomes **king of Rome**; builds Rome's first wall
563 BCE Possible birth date of Siddhartha Gautama, the **Buddha**
560 BCE **Croesus** succeeds to **throne of Lydia** and begins its expansion
550 BCE Birth of **Confucius**, author of the *Analects*, which provide the **central philosophy** of **Chinese** way of life
550 BCE Servius Tullius establishes **Latin League** with Rome's neighbours, beginning slow rise to political ascendancy of city
547 BCE Pisistratus **returns to Athens** and rules again as tyrant

600 BCE **Aryan** kingdoms dominate **northern India**
597 BCE Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon **captures Jerusalem**
589 BCE Apries becomes Egyptian **pharaoh**
585 BCE Thales of Miletus predicts a **solar eclipse**
562 BCE **Nebuchadnezzar II dies**, and is succeeded by Amelmarduk
560 BCE **Pisistratus** becomes **Tyrant of Athens**
559 BCE **Cyrus** the Great becomes **ruler** of **Anshan**
550 BCE Rich **states** arise around **Red Sea** and **Gulf of Aden**
550 BCE Cyrus wins **Median throne**
547 BCE Cyrus **invades Lydia**, capturing Sardis the next year and deposing Croesus
545 BCE The Ionian **Greek cities** of Asia Minor are forced to accept **Persian overlordship**

> EVEN **DEATH IS NOT TO BE FEARED** BY ONE WHO HAS LIVED WISELY

Gautama Siddharta (Buddha), 563–483 BCE

482

THE NUMBER OF **YEARS** OF THE **ROMAN REPUBLIC**

kingdoms. Of these, Magadha was the most important state. Afterwards, Darius subdued most of the Greek city-states of Ionia, before he **crossed into Europe** in 513 BCE to conquer Thrace.

In Italy, Servius Tullius (r.578–534), the **sixth king of Rome** and said to be a former slave, had succeeded Tarquinius Priscus in 578 BCE. During his reign he implemented **important reforms**, fixing the formal boundaries of the city by dividing the Romans into four "tribes", a system that would be extended as Roman territory grew, and also into classes that were **graded by wealth**. The population was divided by what equipment they could afford and what role they played in the Roman army. The wealthiest class fought as cavalry, the higher classes as heavy infantry, and the poor as light auxiliary troops.The votes of the richer classes carried much greater weight in the popular assembly. **The last king of Rome**, Tarquinius Superbus (r.534–509 BCE) was an Etruscan. Concerned at the **growing tyranny** of his rule, a group of Roman aristocrats led by Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus (the king's cousin) won over the army and barred the gates of the city to the king, who was deposed. The coup leaders then **established a republic** in which supreme authority was held by two magistrates called **consuls**. The power of the consuls was limited by the fact that **new consuls were elected** by the popular assembly each year.

Some time around 530 BCE, **Gautama Siddharta**, a Hindu prince of Kapilvastu (now in Nepal), had a religious revelation and rejected his noble upbringing to embark on a quest for "enlightenment". Six years later he received it and began to preach a way of moderate asceticism to gain release from the suffering of material life. He is known as the Buddha (which means the "awakened one" in Sanskrit) and his followers, who became known as **Buddhists**, spread his ideas throughout South Asia and, in the late 3rd century CE into China and thence to Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Confucius (or Kong Fuzi) was born around 551 BCE, in a period of political instability during China's **Spring and Autumn period**. From the age of 15 he devoted himself to scholarship, and the **political philosophy** he developed reflects the turbulent times. He taught that the righteous man (or junzi) must have regard to others and **inflict no unnecessary harm**. His philosophy, as developed by his disciples, taught respect for elders and became a cornerstone of the later imperial system.

CYRUS THE GREAT
(r.559–539 BCE)

Little is known about the early life of Cyrus. He was the ruler of the kingdom of Pars when he led a revolt against his Median overlord Astyages. By defeating Astyages, Cyrus became king of the Medes. He then continued to expand Persian influence with the conquest of Lydia. Cyrus adapted local ideas about kingship to cast himself as an ideal ruler in the cities he conquered. Cyrus died in 539 BCE.

Persian elite
These archers from the palace of Darius at Susa were the elite of the Persian army, which included representatives from provinces as far off as Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

540 BCE Mahavira, founder of the **Jain religion**, is born

540 BCE King Bimbisara **starts** to **rule** Magadha

539 BCE Rebellion breaks out in **Babylon**; Cyrus enters city and annexes it

538 BCE Cyrus **occupies Jerusalem** and permits exiled Jews in Babylon to return home

535 BCE Greeks and Carthaginians fight a **naval battle** off Alalia, Corsica

534 BCE Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus comes to the throne

533 BCE Armies of Cyrus the Great enter **northern India**

530 BCE Cyrus is **killed** on campaign against Massagetae

525 BCE Cambyses invades Egypt, **defeats Egyptians** at Pelusium, captures Memphis, and deposes Pharaoh Psammetichus III, ending Saite dynasty

521 BCE After **civil war**, **Darius I** comes to Persian throne

520 BCE Tarquinius Superbus begins building the **Capitol** in Rome

538–515 BCE Rebuilding of Temple in Jerusalem (burnt in **587 BCE**) is completed

515 BCE Darius **builds royal residence** at Susa, the former Elamite capital

520 BCE Darius I **suppresses revolt** in Babylon, completes canal connecting Nile with Red Sea

510 BCE Alcmaeonids **expel Pisistratids** from Athens with help from Spartan king

514 BCE Harmodius and Aristogiton **revolt** against Pisistratids in Athens, but fail

507 BCE Cleisthenes establishes **democratic government** in Athens

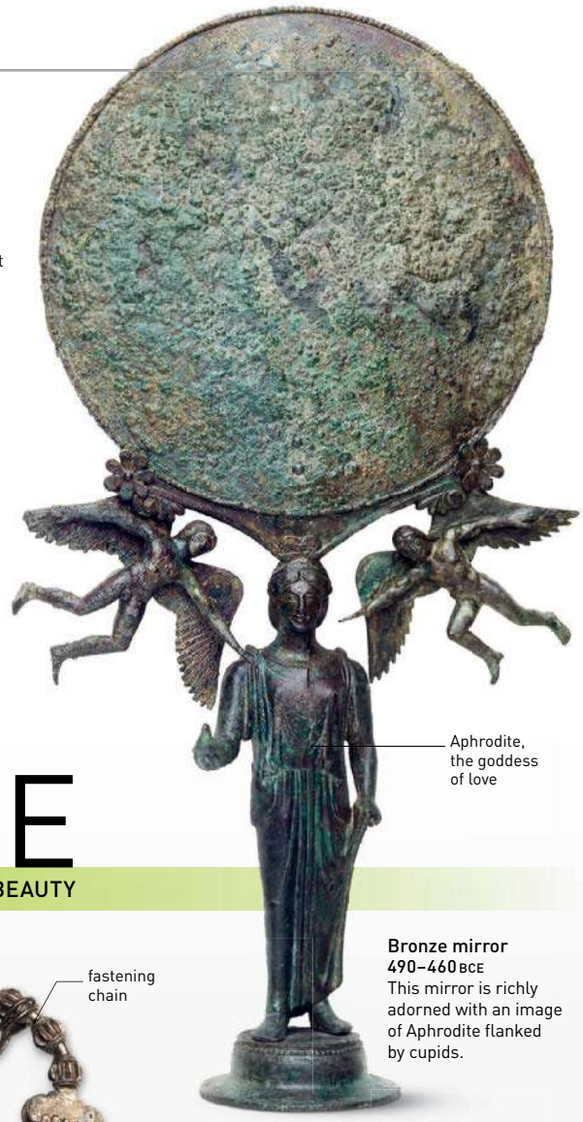
509 BCE Romans expel Tarquinius Superbus and set up a **republic**

504 BCE Tarquinius Superbus tries to **retake Rome**, but fails

Medusa antefix
DATE UNKNOWN
This terracotta antefix – an ornament placed at the cornice of buildings or at roof eaves – is in the form of Medusa, the mythical creature whose gaze turned people to stone.

Corinthian helmet
600–500 BCE
The Corinthian helmet, made from a single bronze sheet, was the most common type in Greece, from around 750–300 BCE.

Spearhead
600–400 BCE
Greek hoplites (armed infantry soldiers) carried a large thrusting spear, of which this is the tip.



ANCIENT GREECE

FROM THE FUNCTIONAL TO THE DECORATIVE, THE GREEKS PRODUCED ART OF GREAT BEAUTY

While the Greeks created magnificent monumental art, smaller items such as jewellery, musical instruments, weaponry, and vases show the Greek love of intricate forms and decorative adornment throughout all periods of their history.

Bronze mirror
490–460 BCE
This mirror is richly adorned with an image of Aphrodite flanked by cupids.

Greek art underwent a series of phases that were reflected in all aspects of artistic production, but particularly on vases. In the Geometric phase (*c.*850–700 BCE), decoration was mainly composed of geometric forms, replaced in the Orientalizing phase (*c.*700–600 BCE) with floral and animal themes, followed by the more naturalistic representations of the Classical phase (from 600 BCE).

Mirror lid and fibula
420–400 BCE
This silver fibula (brooch) and chain may have fastened together a cloak. The ornate mirror-back shows Aphrodite with the half-goat god Pan.

Gold earrings
420–400 BCE
These delicate gold filigree earrings depict boats containing sirens, mythical creatures whose beautiful voices lured unwary seafarers to their doom.

Bronze cymbals
500–400 BCE
Greek cymbals are bell- or cup-shaped, and are often depicted on vases being held by fauns or satyrs, or by women in Bacchanalian revels.

Gold brooch
650–600 BCE
This hawk-shaped brooch dates from a period in which Oriental (and particularly Egyptian) influences were strong in Greece.

Aulos
400 BCE
This wind instrument was originally a double one (one wooden pipe has been lost), played through a reed.

Boeotian horse and rider figurine
550 BCE
The depiction of this horse and rider has an archaic feel about it, in contrast to the production of Boeotian terracotta workshops over 200 years later (see right).

Boeotian figurine
400–200 BCE
This terracotta figurine of a woman holding a jar comes from Boeotia, where a tradition of such sculptures began as early as the 8th century BCE.

Ostrakon
***c.*475–470 BCE**
In Athens, influential politicians could be ostracized (exiled) by public vote. The name of the politician each voter wished to be banished was inscribed on a piece of pottery.

Discus
600–500 BCE
This fine bronze discus belonged to an athlete called Exoidas. After he won a victory in a sporting contest using it, he dedicated the discus to the gods Castor and Pollux.

Attic askos
425–400 BCE
The askos was a type of vessel for pouring liquids such as oil, shaped in the form of a traditional wine sack. The design is in the red-figure style that became popular around 530 BCE.

Attic skyphos
525–500 BCE
This drinking vessel shows a couple at their wedding standing in a chariot. The vase is painted in the black-figure style.

Apulian pyxis
500–400 BCE
A pyxis was often used for storing small items of jewellery and cosmetics. This south-Italian example is decorated with geometrical shapes.

Athenian amphora
540–530 BCE
An amphora was a type of vessel used for storing wine. This one is decorated using the black-figure technique, which pre-dates the red-figure method.

Attic lekythos
480–470 BCE
Greek vases were often painted with mythological scenes. This black-figure vase shows the goddess Athena beating a giant to his knees.

Epichysis
375–340 BCE
The long-spouted epichysis was a vessel used for pouring wine. This south-Italian vase has its base decorated with a pattern of white chevrons.

“THIS IS **GOOD NEWS** … IF THE PERSIANS **HIDE THE SUN,** WE SHALL DO BATTLE **IN THE SHADE.**”

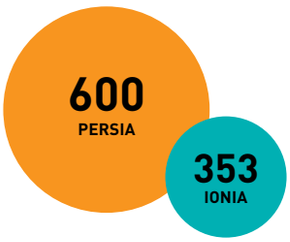
Herodotus, ancient Greek historian, quoting words attributed to Dieneces, a Spartan, on being told that the Persian archers shot so many arrows they would conceal the Sun; from *Histories*

This 19th-century painting shows the Spartan king Leonidas I (centre, facing) and his men at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. Thermopylae became a byword for heroic defiance against overwhelming odds.

Plebeians withdraw from Rome
The departure of the plebeians (on the left in this engraving) threatened to split Rome irreparably, so the patricians (right) ceded some political power.

THE GREEK CITY-STATES OF IONIA in western Anatolia had been subjects of the Persian Empire since Cyrus conquered Lydia, their previous overlord, in 547 BCE (see 550–501 BCE). In 499 BCE, **Aristagoras**, the ruler of Miletus, set out to mainland Greece to recruit allies for a **planned uprising** against the Persians. Sparta rejected his pleas, but only Athens and Eretria sent forces. A failed attack on Sardis led the Athenian forces to return home. The Ionians gradually lost ground to a **Persian land offensive** from 497 BCE. The fall of Miletus to the Persians that year and the death of Aristagoras undermined Ionian unity and, after a great naval defeat at the **Battle of Lade** in 494 BCE, the revolt fell apart.

In Italy, the **young Roman Republic** was rocked by **social dissent** in 494 BCE when the plebeians (the lower social groups) withdrew from Rome en masse in protest at their treatment by the patricians (the higher social groups); they threatened to set up an alternative state. They were persuaded back only by official recognition of their own representatives (tribunes).



The Battle of Lade
The Ionian Greek navy fought hard at Lade, but the pre-arranged defection of the Samians to the Persians led to its utter defeat.

THE KINGDOM OF MAGADHA emerged as an important state in northern India under the rule of **Bimbisara** (r.543–491 BCE), friend and protector of Gautama **Buddha** (*c.*563–*c.*486 BCE), who founded Buddhism (see 550–501 BCE). Bimbisara's son Ajatashastru (r.491–461 BCE) strengthened the royal capital at Rajagirha and **built a centre at Pataligrama** on the Ganges, which later became **Pataliputra, the Mauryan royal capital** By conquering Kosala and Kashi, and annexing the Vrijji confederacy, Ajatashastru turned Magadha into the **dominant power** on the Ganges Plain.

In China, the political system of the Spring and Autumn period evolved into the **Warring States period** (481–221 BCE), in which seven main states engaged in a constant round of diplomatic manoeuvres to weaken each other, periodically interrupted by outbreaks of war.

In 490 BCE, **Darius I** (548–486 BCE) of Persia decided to take revenge on the mainland Greeks for their support of the Ionian revolt. Darius despatched a **huge naval expedition** under Artaphernes and Datis, which sailed from Cilicia, landing first at Naxos before seizing Eretria, which had aided the Ionians in 499 BCE. Although the **Athenians** appealed to Sparta for aid, the only help they received came from Plataea, which sent 1,000 reinforcements. The Athenians opted to march out to meet the **Persians** rather than wait for a siege, on the advice of their general, Miltiades (550–489 BCE). In 490 BCE at

Persian winged-lion rhyton
The Persian Empire enjoyed vast wealth, as illustrated by everyday items such as this golden drinking vessel. They directed huge resources towards the conquest of Greece.

animals were often the inspiration for a rhyton's shape

7 THE **NUMBER** OF **WARRING STATES**

c.500 BCE Darius I begins building **Persepolis** and the Persian Royal Road

c.500 BCE **Ironworking** reaches Southeast Asia and Great Lakes region of Africa; in Africa, the **Nok culture** flourishes

c.500 BCE The ***Mahabharata*** and the ***Puranas*** composed in India

494 BCE **Withdrawal of the plebeians** in Rome leads to creation of the **tribunes** of the plebs

c.490 BCE Carthaginian mariner **Hanno** is said to have sailed far down the west coast of **Africa**

486 BCE **Egyptians** revolt against Persian rule

485 BCE **Darius I** of Persia dies (b.550) and is succeeded by his son **Xerxes**

483 BCE **Athenians** begin to **build a fleet** on the proceeds of the new silver mines at Mount Laurium

c.500 BCE **Rice farming** reaches Japan from China

c.500 BCE In Central America the Zapotecs develop **hieroglyphic writing**

499 BCE **Ionian revolt** begins (to 494 BCE)

496 BCE First **treaty** between **Carthage** and **Rome**

492 BCE Persians invade and **subdue Thrace** and **Macedonia**

490 BCE **Darius I** avenges Athens' involvement in the Ionian revolt; they destroy the city of Eretria, but Miltiades defeats them at the **Battle of Marathon**

484 BCE Greek dramatist **Aeschylus** (525–456 BCE) wins his first Tragedy prize at Athens

483 BCE **Buddha** dies (b.*c.*563 BCE)

Marathon, the Greek hoplite (heavy infantry) formation advanced head-on against a far more numerous Persian force to win **an unlikely victory**.

Chastened, the Persian expeditionary force withdrew from Greece after Marathon, but in 481 BCE **Xerxes I** (519–465 BCE) despatched another huge Persian army, which crossed over the Hellespont (near modern-day Istanbul) and proceeded south towards Athens. Many northern Greek states chose to submit, but Athens and Sparta patched together a league of southern states. In 480 BCE, a **heroic defence** of the pass at **Thermopylae** by the Spartan king Leonidas I, in which he and all his 10,000 soldiers died, bought time for the Athenians to evacuate. The Persians burnt the city, but soon after, under the command of **Themistocles** (see panel below), the Athenian fleet inflicted a serious defeat on Xerxes's naval force at **Salamis**. Further Greek victories followed in June 479 BCE, on land at Plataea in Boeotia and at sea at Mycale off the Ionian coast. The Greeks then took the offensive, and during 478–477 BCE won a string of victories in Ionia and Cyprus, which **reversed most of the Persians' gains**.

The Greco–Persian wars
Although the Persians possessed vastly superior numbers, the Greek forces were motivated to win crucial land and sea engagements.

After the initial defeats of the Persians in 480–479 BCE, Athens sought to formalize the **league of anti-Persian allies**. A treasury was set up on the island of Delos in around 477 BCE. The league's funds were to be deposited here and regular meetings were to take place. But this **Delian League** soon became little more than an Athenian empire, and Sparta and its allies refused to take part.

THEMISTOCLES (c.524–460 BCE)

A clever politician and strategist, Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to use the wealth of a silver mine discovered at Laurium in 483/2 BCE to double their fleet. However, after the naval victory at Salamis, he became the object of increasing jealousy from political rivals. In about 470 BCE Themistocles was ostracized from Athens (exiled by public vote).

> "THE GREAT STRUGGLE HAS COME."
>
> **Herodotus, ancient Greek historian**, quoting Pausanias, the Spartan commander, before the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE; from *Histories*

THE ATHENIANS ENJOYED EARLY SUCCESS under the direction of Cimon (510–450 BCE), wresting Eion on the Strymon river (in Anatolia) from the Persians in 476 BCE and then attacking Carystos on Euboea (which had submitted to the Persians) in 470 BCE. An attempt by the island of Naxos to leave the Delian League around the same time led to an Athenian expeditionary force that powerfully suppressed the breakaway movement. In 469 BCE, Athenian forces won a great **victory over the Persians** at the River Eurymedon on the south coast of Anatolia, establishing Athenian supremacy in the Aegean.

Pericles (c.495–429 BCE), the Athenian statesman largely responsible for making Athens the political and cultural focus of Greece, tried but failed to prosecute Cimon in 463 BCE, on a charge of having neglected a chance to conquer Macedonia. From this manoeuvre, **Pericles' vision** and ideas of expansion for Athens were already evident. When the leading figure among the democrats, Ephialtes, was assassinated in 461 BCE, Pericles, his protégé, swiftly took his place.

Periodically, the Persians had tried to bribe the Spartans into diversionary attacks on Athens but initially to little effect. In 464 BCE, a **revolt of the Messenian Helots** (unfree men) in the western Peloponnese further distracted the Spartans from any attempt to stem the rising power of the Delian League. The Messenians received little outside assistance, and by 462 BCE their last stronghold at Ithome had been reduced. Soon after, open conflict broke out between Sparta and Athens and their respective allies. The **First Peloponnesian War** was inconclusive. It ended in 451 BCE with a five-year truce, extended in 446 BCE to a **Thirty Years Peace** between the two sides.

Athenian treasury at Delos
All members of the Delian League had to deposit funds at treasuries on Delos, but the contribution of Athens was the most important.

Meanwhile, the western part of the Greek world was becoming increasingly important, marked by the **rise of** the Sicilian city-state of **Syracuse**. Under a series of able rulers (tyrants) that began with **Gelon** (r.485–478 BCE) and his brother **Hieron** (r.478–467 BCE), Syracusan forces subdued the neighbouring city of Acragas and expanded territory around Catana. Although Hieron's younger brother **Thrasybulus** was driven out in 466 BCE, the Syracusans retained their dominant position in Sicily beyond the 450s BCE.

480 BCE Xerxes I of Persia invades Greece and burns Athens, but is defeated by Themistocles at the naval **Battle of Salamis**

480 BCE **Carthage** attacks the Greeks of Sicily but is repulsed

479 BCE Persians are defeated at **Plataea** and **Mycale**, and withdraw from mainland Greece

479 BCE Chinese social philosopher **Confucius**, who developed a humanistic ethical system, dies (b.551 BCE)

478 BCE Athens founds the **Delian League** to counter Sparta's attempts to dominate Greece

478 BCE Hieron becomes **Tyrant of Syracuse** and defeats the Etruscans

c.470 BCE **Themistocles** is ostracized from Athens

469 BCE Naxos tries to secede from the **Delian League** and is blockaded by Athens

465 BCE Xerxes is murdered by his bodyguard; his son **Artaxerxes** succeeds him

464 BCE The **Helots revolt** against Spartan rule, but they are defeated by 462 BCE

463 BCE The rise to power of **Pericles** begins; he has Cimon ostracized in 461 BCE

458 BCE Athens **defeats the Peloponnesian** cities and Aegina is forced to join the Delian League

454 BCE Pericles transfers the **treasure** of the Delian League to **Athens**

458 BCE The **Qin domain** in China is partitioned

452 BCE A **five-year truce** between Athens and the Peloponnesians begins

In the late 5th century, the Mexican city of Monte Albán began to build its public buildings – the ancestors of its later magnificent pyramids, shown here.

IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, the two social classes – the patricians and the plebeians (see 500–491 BCE) – were still divided. The two sides came to an agreement in 451 BCE, appointing a group of ten men (**the decemviri**) to govern Rome outside the normal constitution. In 449 BCE, the decemviri produced the **Laws of the Twelve Tables**, which formed the basis of all Roman law codes.

Around 450 BCE in Central Europe, a **new Celtic culture emerged** called **La Tène**, which supplanted the earlier dominant Halstatt culture. Ruled over by a warrior aristocracy that buried its dead with swords, spears, and funerary chariots, La Tène had important centres in Bohemia (in what is now the Czech Republic) and around the Marne and Moselle rivers (in modern France).

In Oaxaca on Mexico's Pacific Coast, a new centre arose shortly before 450 BCE at **Monte Albán**. This proto-city, on a hill top above the Oaxaca Valley, drew people from the surrounding agricultural villages. Monte Albán's centre housed **large-scale public buildings** – including truncated pyramids, great plazas, and ballgame courts – as well as elaborate burial tombs. Within 150 years, the population of Monte Albán would swell to around 17,000, making it the **largest city in Mesoamerica**.

12

THE NUMBER OF **TABLES** OF **ROMAN** LAW

Zapotec figure from Monte Albán
This elaborate ceramic deity is typical of the production of Monte Albán, which became Mexico's premier site in the 5th century BCE.

ATHENS AND SPARTA HAD FOUGHT EACH OTHER BEFORE (see 451 BCE). The Athenian Empire had the **naval advantage** as it included most of the island and coastal states around the northern and eastern shores of the Aegean Sea. Meanwhile, the city-state of Sparta led an alliance of independent states from the Peloponnese and central Greece, as well as Corinth, and had the **strongest army**. Despite the Thirty Years Peace of 446 BCE, tensions remained high between Athens and Sparta. The events that led to **renewed hostilities** in 430 BCE began three years earlier, when Athens had intervened on behalf of Corcyra in a dispute with Corinth; the Spartans took it as a sign that Athens had breached the peace. An attack by Thebes, a Spartan ally, on Plataea, which supported Athens, was similarly taken by the Athenians to indicate Sparta was fixed on war. Athens, led by Pericles, achieved early success in the **Peloponnesian War** (431–404 BCE). In 426 BCE, **the Athenians invaded the Peloponnese**, and the following year landed a large force at Pylos southwest of Sparta. Yet neither side could land a fatal blow and in 421 BCE they agreed the **Peace of Nicias**, which was supposed to last for 50 years.

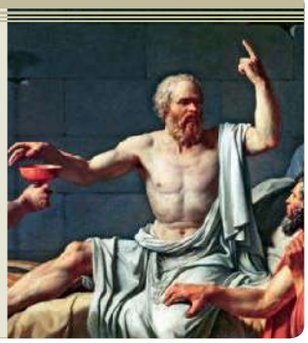
The truce soon began to unravel. Corinth refused to recognize its authority, a pro-war leadership emerged in Sparta, and a complex set of political manoeuvres by **Alcibiades** (450–404 BCE), the newly dominant politician in Athens, led to the **renewal of the war** in 419 BCE. The following year, Sparta's allies won a **key victory at Mantinea**. Athens struck back

> “THE **EMPIRE** YOU POSSESS IS BY NOW **LIKE A TYRANNY** – PERHAPS WRONG TO ACQUIRE IT, BUT CERTAINLY **DANGEROUS** TO LET IT GO.”

Thucydides, ancient Greek historian, relating a speech by Pericles to the Athenians; from *History of the Peloponnesian War*, II.63

SOCRATES (469–399 BCE)

One of the greatest Greek philosophers, Socrates served on the Athenian Council in 406 BCE, but his challenges to conventional morality at a time of political uncertainty gained him powerful enemies. He refused to mount a conventional defence against charges of corrupting the Athenian youth and was sentenced to die by drinking the poison hemlock.



c.450 BCE **La Tène culture** emerges in Central Europe

c.450 BCE Construction begins of Zapotec city of **Monte Albán** in Mexico

449 BCE **Peace of Callias** struck between Greeks and Persians

449 BCE Pericles begins **building the Long Wall** between Athens and its port, Piraeus

433 BCE Athens intervenes for **Corcyra** in its quarrel with **Corinth**, inviting Spartan retaliation

430 BCE Sparta invades Attica; Athens stricken with **plague**, killing many thousands

427 BCE **City of Plataea**, an Athenian ally, surrenders to Sparta

423 BCE One-year truce in the war between Athens and Sparta (extended in 422 BCE)

421 BCE **Peace of Nicias** between Athens and Sparta puts temporary halt to Peloponnesian War

c.450 BCE Steppe nomad **burials** at Pazyryk and Noin-Ula in Siberia

449 BCE The **Twelve Tables of the Law** officially adopted in Rome

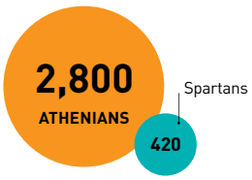
448 BCE Construction of a **new Parthenon** begins (finished 432 BCE)

431 BCE Quarrel between Plataea and Thebes leads to another **Peloponnesian War** between Athens and Sparta

c.428 BCE Birth of Greek philosopher **Plato** (d.c.347 BCE)

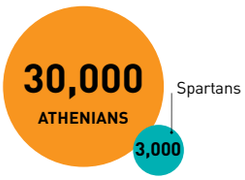
423 BCE **Darius II** becomes Persian king after assassination of Artaxerxes I

The Great Peloponnesian War
The period of 431 to 404 BCE saw the destruction of the Athenian Empire at the hands of a coalition of Sparta and its allies.



BATTLE OF SPHACTERIA 425 BCE

BATTLE OF DELIUM 424 BCE



SIEGE OF SYRACUSE 415–413 BCE

in 416 BCE by capturing Melos – the only main Aegean island not in its possession – but fatally over-reached itself in 415 BCE with an expedition to Sicily, ending in the **total destruction** of the Athenian force by **the Syracusans** in 413 BCE. The Spartans, meanwhile, established a fort at Decelea in Attica, which denied the Athenians access to the rich silver mines. An alliance with Persia further strengthened Sparta's position in 412 BCE, and a year later the democratic regime in Athens was briefly overthrown. Democracy was restored the following year, and, though the Athenians won victories at Cyzicus in 410 BCE and Arginusae in 406 BCE, the **total destruction of their fleet at Aegospotami** off Ionia in 405 BCE left Athens defenceless. The Spartans blockaded the city, and, despite a determined resistance, the **Athenians were forced to surrender**. Athens was deprived of its fleet and in 404 BCE a pro-Spartan Council of Thirty was installed to govern it.

In Magadha in **India** the Haryanka dynasty founded by Bimbisara was replaced *c.*413 BCE after the death of Ajatashatru (*c.*459 BCE) and a series of ineffectual rulers. **Shishunaga founded a new dynasty**, which was responsible for overseeing the final transfer of the Magadha royal capital to **Pataliputra**. The Shishunaga dynasty lasted only 500 years.

AFTER ITS VICTORY IN THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, Sparta found itself embroiled in a quarrel with Persia over whether the Ionian Greek cities should regain their autonomy. Through the 390s BCE, sporadic fighting and abortive peace talks diverted Sparta from a weakening position in mainland Greece. The "**King's Peace**", a definitive treaty with Persia in 386 BCE, deprived the Ionians of autonomy but allowed the Spartans to quash any threats to its supremacy. In 385 BCE, they attacked Mantinea in the central Peloponnese and in 382 BCE occupied Thebes. Spartan power seemed unassailable.

In Persia, the **death of Darius II** (r.423–404 BCE) was followed by a **brief civil war**, when Cyrus the Younger tried to overthrow his older brother **Artaxerxes II** (r.404–358 BCE). Cyrus was defeated and killed at the **Battle of Cunaxa** in 401 BCE, but in its aftermath some 10,000 Greek mercenaries were left trapped in northern Mesopotamia. Under **Xenophon**, the Greeks marched to the Black Sea coast and safety near Trapezus (Trabzon in modern-day Turkey), a feat their commander immortalized in his book *Anabasis*.

In Italy, the **Romans widened their territory** and annexed the city of Veii in 396 BCE, whose submission represented the **end of any Etruscan threat**. However, *c.*390 BCE, an army of Celts, who had been attacking the Etruscan city of Clusium, turned south, defeated a Roman army at the Battle of the Allia, and then **took Rome** itself. This disaster haunted the Romans for centuries.

Etruscan tomb painting
The Etruscan language has never been deciphered, so it is through the frescoes in their tombs that much has been learnt of their culture.

419 BCE Peloponnesian War resumes; Spartans win **Battle of Mantinea** and Argos changes sides

415 BCE Athenian **expedition to Sicily** sets out under Alcibiades

413 BCE Athenians **defeated at Syracuse**; virtually whole army is captured

c.413 BCE Shishunaga dynasty founded in Magadha, India

411 BCE Attempted **oligarchic revolution** in Athens; a Council of the Four Hundred set up, but fails to last

409 BCE Carthaginians invade Sicily in attempt to re-exert influence there while the Greek city-states are at war

405 BCE Athenian fleet is badly **defeated at Aegospotami** putting an end to Athenian naval supremacy

404 BCE Spartans capture Athens; long walls pulled down and pro-Spartan **Council of Thirty** set up as government

403 BCE Council of Thirty in Athens dissolved; **democracy restored**

c.400 BCE Moche culture emerges in Peru

399 BCE Greek philosopher **Socrates** executed

398–397 BCE Dionysius of Syracuse wins war against Carthaginians

401 BCE Xenophon leads 10,000 Greek mercenaries supporting a Persian rebellion from Babylon to the Black Sea

399 BCE Egypt breaks away from Persia and begins its 29th dynasty

384 BCE Plato completes his *Symposium* and founds his Academy

396 BCE Romans capture Etruscan **city of Veii**

383 BCE War restarts between **Carthage** and Dionysius of **Syracuse**

386 BCE Sparta and Persia sign the "**King's Peace**"

Sutton Hoo buckle

Sutton Hoo buckle
Made of solid gold and decorated with an interlaced animal pattern, the Anglo-Saxon Sutton Hoo belt buckle was found in a 7th-century ship burial in East Anglia, England.

Prehistory
Use of copper ore
In western Iran and Anatolia, copper ore is ground or beaten into shape to make small objects such as beads.

Copper ore

***c.*1500–1200 BCE**
Refinement of bronze casting
New techniques are developed for casting and adorning bronze vessels, such as decorating them by beating on the inside.

Shang cauldron

***c.*900 BCE–100 CE**
Using iron
Ironworking spreads from western Anatolia, reaching Greece around 900 BCE and West Africa about 400 BCE, enabling stronger tools and weapons to be made.

Weapon heads

***c.*100–700**
Anglo-Saxon metalworking
The Anglo-Saxons bring a new level of sophistication to metalworking, often using animal forms as decoration.

2600–2400 BCE
Use of beaten copper plate
Early copper smelting methods are refined, allowing the beating of copper while still hot into more complex shapes.

Sumerian copper bull

***c.*1500–30 BCE**
Purifying gold
The ancient Egyptians learn how to separate pure gold from silver in around 1500 BCE and begin to use it more extensively for decorative purposes.

Funeral mask of Tutankhamun

***c.*640–500 BCE**
Metal as money
Metal coins (made of an alloy of gold and silver) are first used in Lydia (in present-day Turkey) around 640 BCE. The ancient Greeks adopt the idea and spread it around the Mediterranean.

Greek coin

THE STORY OF METALWORKING

FROM EVERYDAY OBJECTS TO COMPLEX MACHINES, METALS ARE VITAL FOR OUR CIVILIZATION

Since their earliest known use in the 8th millennium BCE, metals have played a crucial role in the production of a vast range of objects, and even today, with the availability of sophisticated polymers and composites, they still permeate every aspect of modern civilization.

Around 7000 BCE, naturally occurring metals, notably copper, began to be used for small items such as pins in western Iran and eastern Anatolia. These were made by simply grinding or beating the metal into shape. Heating copper to make it more malleable was probably discovered by accidentally dropping the metal in fire, but it was the introduction of smelting in a crucible around 3800 BCE that led to the large-scale use of metals.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALLOYS

About 3000 BCE, the first alloy – bronze – was produced. Made by smelting tin and copper together in a crucible, bronze is stronger and more easily worked than either of its individual constituents, and it remained the principal metal for tools and weapons until the invention of ironworking around 1250 BCE. The technology to melt pure iron was not invented until the 19th century, so early iron objects were made by first smelting iron ore to an impure iron "bloom", then separating out the iron pieces and welding them together in a furnace. This method of production continued until the introduction of blast furnaces in Europe in the 15th century. The Industrial Revolution in the 18th century brought new techniques and the use of coking coal in blast furnaces, but it was English inventor Henry Bessemer's invention of the Bessemer converter in 1856 that permitted the large-scale production of steel, a strong, high-quality, iron–carbon alloy. Later in the Industrial Revolution, further advances made it possible to produce other metals, such as aluminium, magnesium, and titanium, whose light weight and strength played a vital role in the development of the aviation and space industries.

1,083°C

THE **MELTING POINT** OF **COPPER.** WHEN COPPER IS **ALLOYED** WITH **TIN**, THIS **DROPS** TO **950°C**

HOW ALLOYS ARE MADE

An alloy is a mixture of metals or of a metal with a non-metal (such as iron with carbon in steel). Many metals occur naturally in alloyed form, but synthetic alloys were not produced until around 3000 BCE, when copper was melted with tin to produce bronze. The technique spread, reaching Mesopotamia soon after 3000 BCE and Egypt by 2000 BCE or possibly earlier.

700–800
Sword-making
In Europe, sword-makers develop stronger swords by welding together successive layers of iron with carbon added, or by beating out thin iron strips then welding them together.

Viking sword

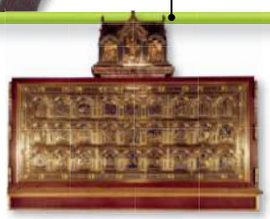
c.15th century
Weapons from cast metal
Cast iron is developed. Because it is strong and can be used to make shapes such as tubes, it finds an immediate use in making artillery.

Medieval cannon

Lockheed Blackbird

1950s
Titanium aircraft
Because of its high strength-to-weight ratio, titanium starts to be extensively used in military aircraft. It is now also widely used in commercial aircraft.

800–1300/1450
Christian objects in precious metals
Medieval Christians make sacred objects, such as crucifixes and reliquaries, from gold and other precious metals, sometimes encrusted with gemstones.



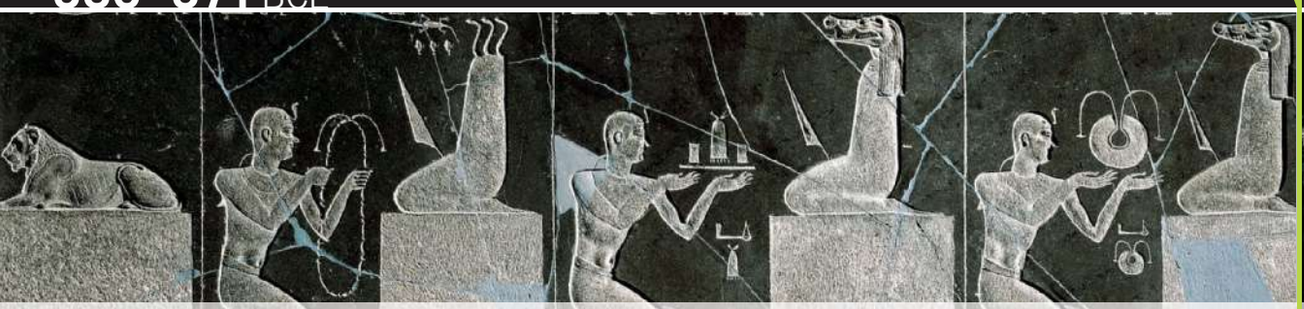
The Verdun Altar

1810
Tin can
English inventor Peter Durand patents the tin can for preserving food. His patent was for a can made of iron and coated with tin to inhibit rusting of the iron.

1856
Bessemer converter
Englishman Henry Bessemer invents a converter that enables large-scale production of high-quality steel.

Bessemer converter

1910
Aluminium foil
The first aluminium foil is produced. It was made possible by the invention in 1886 of a method of mass-producing the metal by passing an electric current through molten ore.



A carving showing the pharaoh Nectanebo I, founder of the 30th Dynasty, making offerings to gods, including the crocodile-headed Sobek.

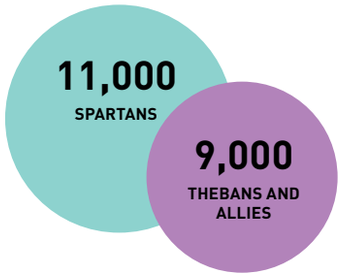
EGYPT HAD BROKEN AWAY FROM Persian control after the revolt of Amyrtaeus, who founded the 28th Dynasty in 404 BCE. However, the **Persians** had not given up on Egypt. **Nectanebo I** established the 30th Egyptian Dynasty in 380 BCE. He was able to repel a force sent by the Persians and their Greek allies in 373 BCE. Persia was diverted from further attempts to bring Egypt to heel by the **Great Rebellion of the Satraps** in the 360s BCE. This rebellion was partially aggravated by the campaigns of Tachos, son of Nectanebo I, in Persian-ruled Palestine from 361–360 BCE. **Nectanebo II** (r.360–343 BCE) succeeded Nectanebo I, and continued to meddle in the Persian civil wars. In an ill-judged intervention in 346 BCE, he sent troops to aid an uprising in Sidon (Lebanon). In response, **Artaxerxes III of Persia** marched into the Nile Delta region in 343 BCE, and Egypt was defeated within two years. Now under Persian rule, Egypt was never again ruled by a native dynasty.

In Greece, the **Spartan occupation of Thebes,** which had begun in 382 BCE, was short-lived. In 379 BCE, the Spartan **polemarch** (governor) of Thebes was assassinated, and the Thebans drove out the Spartan garrison with the aid of two Athenian generals who arrived on their own initiative to help. In retaliation, the **Spartans mounted an expedition** under King Cleombrotus (r.380–371 BCE). This expedition failed to retake Thebes, but it so alarmed the Athenians that they executed one general and exiled the other, and temporarily abandoned the alliance with Thebes. The **Spartans invaded the region of Boeotia** in 378–377 BCE but made little headway, although the Athenians were alarmed enough to revive the Theban alliance and try to establish a **Second Athenian Confederacy** in opposition to Sparta. In 375 BCE the Thebans, Athenians, and Spartans signed a "Common Peace", but it broke down almost immediately. The Thebans then took the offensive, aided by a new elite force of citizen soldiers, the **Sacred Band**, which consisted of 150 male couples. The Sacred Band supplemented the mercenaries who largely fought Greek city-states' wars by this period. Theban attempts to conquer the region of Phocis and retain dominance in Boeotia rankled with Sparta, and scuppered Athenian attempts to broker a peace in 372 BCE. At **Leuctra** in 371 BCE, the Theban army under the general **Epaminondas** fought a tactically brilliant battle to smash the Spartan phalanx. At Sparta's mercy just eight years before, **Thebes** was now the **dominant power in Greece**.

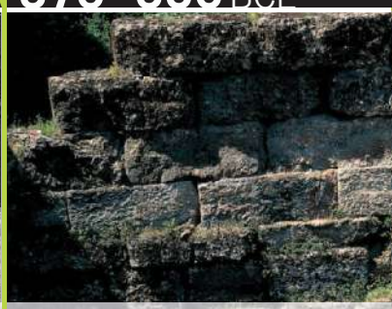
In Sicily, **Syracuse** continued to flourish under the strong rule of **Dionysius I** (402–367 BCE), who fought the third in a series of wars against the Carthaginians from 383 to 375 BCE. At first, the war went badly for Dionysius, whose fleet was wrecked in a storm. Carthaginian efforts to mount an expedition to Sicily were hampered by plague in 379 BCE and a revolt by subject cities in Libya, so that it was only in 377 BCE that an army was landed. Dionysius, who had been campaigning against Carthage's allies in southern Italy, returned to Sicily and **crushed Mago's force** – 10,000 are said to have died. Dionysius allowed the remnants to slip away, and they regrouped and returned the following year under Mago's son Himilco to deliver a stinging defeat to the Syracusans. Both sides were war-weary and in 375 BCE **made peace**, leaving Dionysius in possession of most of eastern Sicily and parts of southern Italy.

150 COUPLES FORMED THE ELITE MILITARY UNIT THE **SACRED BAND OF THEBES**

Temple of Thoth
Situated at Hermopolis in Upper Egypt, the temple of Thoth dates from the New Kingdom but was renovated in the 4th century BCE.



Battle of Leuctra
At Leuctra in central Greece, the Thebans exploited the tendency of the Spartans to shift right by concentrating their attack on the left, enabling them to defeat an enemy with larger numbers than theirs.



The ruins of Thebes, Greece's dominant city-state in the 360s BCE.

ALTHOUGH THE ATHENIANS brokered a **general peace** in Greece in 371 BCE, the Thebans did not participate. Thebes built up a coalition of allies and **invaded Sparta** in 370–369 BCE. As a result, Messenia was finally detached from Spartan control, but further Theban success was hampered by the temporary deposition of **Epaminondas**, who was tried for allegedly sparing the city of Sparta in exchange for a bribe. Once Epaminondas was back in control, the Thebans won Persian backing for their anti-Spartan alliance in 367 BCE, and a further **invasion of the Peloponnese** in 366 BCE gained recruits for the Theban coalition. However, Theban successes relied too narrowly on the personality of one man, and when Epaminondas

Ancient theatre
The Odeon was a temple built in the town of Messene, which was founded by Epaminondas of Thebes in 367 BCE.

c.380 BCE **Farming** and **iron metallurgy** is spread by Bantu-speaking people in the **Western Zambezi** region of Africa

380 BCE **Nectanebo** becomes the first pharaoh of Egypt's 30th Dynasty

373 BCE **Artaxerxes II is defeated** after invading Egypt in attempt to bring it back under Persian control

370 BCE Foundation of the **Nanda dynasty** in India

369 BCE Epaminondas invades **Messenia**

380 BCE The **Servian Wall** is built around Rome

378 BCE Exiled Theban democrats under **Epaminondas** lead an **uprising** against the pro-Spartan ruling party. The Spartan garrison abandons the city of Thebes

371 BCE Athens and Sparta make **peace**, ending an eight-year conflict

371 BCE Theban general Epaminondas wins the **Battle of Leuctra** against Sparta, and the Arcadians revolt against Spartan rule

360 BCE **Revolt of the satraps** (governors) begins in the Persian empire

362 BCE **Battle of Mantinea** marks final eclipse of Spartan power

> “AN ARMY OF DEER **LED BY A LION** IS MORE TO BE FEARED THAN AN ARMY OF LIONS **LED BY A DEER.**”
>
> Attributed to **Philip II, king of Macedonia,** 4th century BCE

was killed in battle in 362 BCE, Theban power was rapidly eclipsed.

In India, the **Nanda dynasty** began its **expansion** in the 370s BCE, and continued to expand until it was able to take power from the Shishunaga in 345 BCE. The dynasty's founder **Mahapadma Nanda** conquered much of north India, building up a huge army. He operated an efficient administrative system with centrally appointed tax collectors and undertook irrigation works. However, the deposition of Dhana Nanda in 321 BCE was followed by the **absorption of the Nanda empire into the Mauryan empire**.

The **state of Chu** was the most southerly of China's **Warring States**, centred on the Middle Yangzi river. Throughout the 5th century BCE it annexed a number of states, becoming the dominant power by 380 BCE. In 366 BCE a resounding victory by the state of **Qin** against the armies of **Hann** and

88

THE AGE OF **MAGAPADMA NANDA** AT HIS DEATH

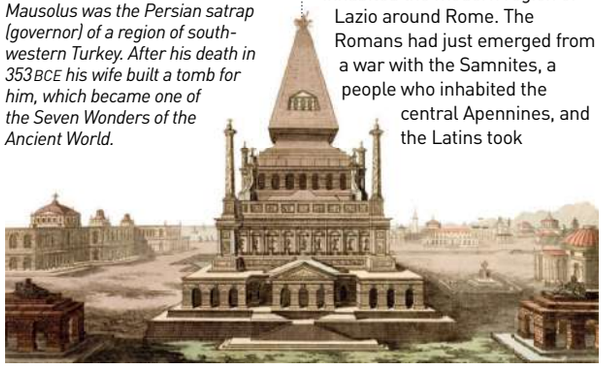
Wei, followed by another defeat of Wei at the **battle of Shimen** in 364 BCE led to Chu's decline and the shift eastwards of Wei's royal centre to Daliang. A rejuvenated Wei was strong enough to force the rulers of four other Warring States to attend its court in 356 BCE. Wei's supremacy was short-lived, and defeats inflicted on it by Qi armies at Guiling in 353 BCE and Maling in 341 BCE reduced it to a Qi vassal.

IN 359 BCE PERDICCAS III OF Macedonia died and his successor, **Philip II** (r.359–336 BCE) began to transform the position of what had been regarded by other Greeks as a very minor kingdom. In 357 BCE, he made his first major conquest, Amphipolis in Thrace. He became involved in the **Third Sacred War** (356–346 BCE), which was fought over perceived violations by Sparta and Phocis of the sacred oracle at Delphi, using this to cement his position as an important player in the power politics of central Greece and the Peloponnese. In the 340s, Philip strengthened his position in Thessaly and became involved in petty disputes between the city-states, as rival factions turned either to him or to Athens for support. In 340 BCE **open war** broke out between Philip and the Athenian-Theban alliance. Just two years later, at Chaeronea in Boeotia, **Philip defeated the Athenians** and annihilated the Theban Sacred Band (see 380–371 BCE). Macedonian power in Greece was now unchallenged.

Rome's steady expansion in central Italy had caused alarm among her neighbours. This led to a bitter six-year struggle with the town of Tibur from 360 BCE, among other conflicts. In 340 BCE, a general **war broke out between Rome and the Latins**, who inhabited the modern region of Lazio around Rome. The Romans had just emerged from a war with the Samnites, a people who inhabited the central Apennines, and the Latins took advantage of Rome's exhausted state to launch an attack. During the first year of the war, at a battle near Vesuvius, the consul Publius Decius Mus is said to have dedicated his body to the gods of the underworld and then undertaken a suicidal charge against the Latin ranks which turned the tide of battle in the Roman's favour. By 338 BCE, the **Romans had defeated the Latin League.** The peace terms were favourable, with many Latins being granted Roman citizenship. The League was then dissolved, and many of the former Latin cities were absorbed into the Roman state, moving Rome further towards complete dominance of central Italy.

In Peru, the **Nazca culture** began around 350 BCE. These people created mysterious geoglyphs, huge lines in the desert creating animal and abstract shapes, which cannot be made out from the ground.

Mausoleum of Halicarnassus
Mausolus was the Persian satrap (governor) of a region of south-western Turkey. After his death in 353 BCE his wife built a tomb for him, which became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



PHILIP OF MACEDONIA (382–336 BCE)

Philip II reformed the Macedonian army and forced the Greek states to join a League of Corinth under Macedonian control. After his return to Macedonia, he took a new wife, Cleopatra, but was stabbed to death at his wedding feast, possibly on the orders of his son, Alexander the Great, who stood to lose his position if Cleopatra bore another heir.

361 BCE A joint **Egyptian-Spartan** force attacks the Persian-controlled cities of Phoenicia

359 BCE Philip II becomes **king of Macedonia**

358 BCE In Persia, **Artaxerxes III** succeeds Artaxerxes II and **ends the satraps' revolt**. Fearing possible rivals, he has his whole family massacred

359 BCE Nectanebo II ascends the Egyptian throne

356 BCE Shang Yang, chancellor of the western Chinese state of Qin introduces **wide-ranging reforms**; he increases the power of centralized government and introduces a rigorous penal code

356 BCE "**Sacred War**" between **Athens and Phocis** begins over access to the sacred temple and oracle of Delphi

348 BCE Philip of Macedonia gains control of the **Chalcidice peninsula**

346 BCE Peace between Philip of Macedon and Athens

343 BCE Dionysius II **surrenders** to Timoleon, who led a band of mercenaries to Sicily

342 BCE Persian invasion puts an end to Egyptian independence

338 BCE Rome defeats and dissolves the **Latin League**

339 BCE Artaxerxes III of Persia **dies** of poisoning, and is **replaced by Arsees**, his younger son

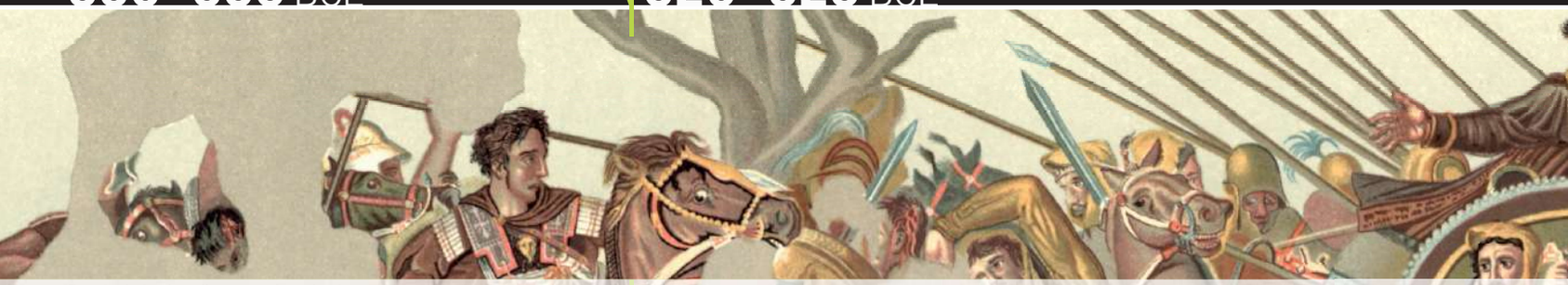
346 BCE Dionysius II becomes **Tyrant of Sicily**

342 BCE Philip of Macedonia **conquers Thrace**

341 BCE War breaks out between Rome and the **Latin League**

338 BCE Philip of Macedonia defeats coalition of Greek states and gains **control of most of Greece**

337 BCE Philip of Macedonia announces plans to **liberate the Ionian Greek cities** in Asia Minor



Despite being heavily outnumbered at Issus, Alexander the Great, depicted here on his horse Bucephalus, made brilliant use of his cavalry to win a stunning victory over King Darius III.

Ruins of Persepolis
The Persian ceremonial capital of Persepolis was burnt to the ground by Alexander's troops in 330 BCE.

AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF PHILIP OF MACEDONIA in 336 BCE (see 355–337 BCE), his 20-year-old son Alexander (often referred to as Alexander the Great) became commander of the major Greek city states. The next year Alexander invaded Thrace, but a rumour that he had been killed caused a major revolt centred on the Greek city of Thebes, supported by **Darius III of Persia** (r.336–330 BCE). Alexander reacted swiftly; the Thebans were defeated and their city razed to the ground. The other states soon submitted. In 334 BCE, Alexander hurried to Anatolia, where a Macedonian army was already established, totalling perhaps 43,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry. Although this figure was dwarfed by the forces of the local Persian satraps (governors), Alexander's cavalry smashed the lines of the **satrap Arsites** at the River Granicus in northwest Turkey. He pushed on towards the heart of the Persian Empire. In 333 BCE, at Issus, northern Syria, he routed an army led by Darius III himself. In 331 BCE, the Macedonians defeated Darius III again at **Gaugamela** (in modern Iraq). The next year Darius was stabbed to death by **Bessus**, one of his generals. Alexander now seemed to have acquired the whole of the vast Persian Empire.

Aristotle
The philosopher Aristotle was employed by Philip of Macedonia as Alexander the Great's tutor.

AFTER HIS MURDER OF DARIUS, Bessus declared himself the new king of Persia (as **Artaxerxes V**), but some of the Persian satraps submitted to Alexander instead of Bessus. During 330–329 BCE, Alexander pursued Bessus into the easternmost regions of the Persian Empire, beyond the Hindu Kush and into Bactria. Finally, in Sogdiana, north of the River Oxus, the local nobles, led by the Sogdian warlord **Spitamenes**, betrayed Bessus and handed him over to Alexander. Once Alexander had continued his march north, however, Spitamenes revolted. It took Alexander a year of bitter campaigning to relieve the **siege of Macaranda** (Samarkand) and pacify Sogdiana, although the fortress of the "Sogdian Rock" managed to hold out against the Macedonian forces until 327 BCE. Alexander then crossed into the Kabul Valley and the following year, at the river Hydaspes, he overcame the local ruler **Porus**. His plans to push further into India were stymied by his soldiers who, demoralized and disease-ridden, mutinied and demanded to go home. Part of the army returned home by sea under Nearchus, but a detachment under Alexander marched through the harsh Gedrosian desert, suffering heavy losses. His army reached central Persia early in 324 BCE, but Alexander, still planning new expeditions into Arabia, died of a fever at Babylon in May 323 BCE, aged 33.

In central Italy, the Samnites of the central-southern Apennines, who had lost a war against the Romans in 342–340 BCE, fought them once more in the **Second Samnite War** (326–304 BCE). The advance of the Romans into Campania after their abolition of the **Latin League** in 338 BCE alarmed the Samnites, and the Roman placing of a colony in their land in 328 BCE and tensions over the control of Neapolis (Naples) led to the **outbreak of war** in 326 BCE. In 321 BCE, the Samnites defeated a Roman army at the Caudine Forks. The **Romans were humiliated** by being forced to bow down and "pass under the yoke" (an arch made from their captured spears). Four years of peace followed before the Romans renewed the war and, despite dogged resistance by the Samnites, finally emerged victorious in 304 BCE.

Alexander the Great's conquests
Alexander penetrated the farthest corners of the Persian empire. To cement his rule he founded a series of new cities, almost all named after himself, notably Alexandria in Egypt.

CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER
- Macedonian Empire 336-323 BCE
- Route taken by Alexander's forces

30

THE AGE OF ALEXANDER'S **FAVOURITE HORSE, BUCEPHALUS,** WHEN IT DIED

336 BCE Philip of Macedonia murdered; he is succeeded by his son **Alexander**

335 BCE Philosopher **Aristotle** founds a school in Athens

334 BCE Alexander defeats Persians at the **River Granicus**

332 BCE Zeno of Cyprus founds the **Stoic school** of philosophers in Athens

330 BCE Alexander's army pillages **Persepolis**

336 BCE **Darius III** comes to the Persian throne

333 BCE Darius III beaten by Alexander at the **Battle of Issus**

332 BCE Alexander **conquers Egypt**

331 BCE Persians defeated by Alexander at **Battle of Gaugamela**

330 BCE Darius III assassinated by the rebel satrap **Bessus**

329–327 BCE Alexander conquers **Bactria** and **Sogdiana**

327 BCE **Romans** become involved in a dispute with the **Samnites** over control of the Greek city of **Neapolis**

326 BCE **Alexander seriously wounded** during the siege of the capital of the Malli people

325 BCE The prince of **Qin** takes title of Wang (king), a claim to be the ruler of all China

324 BCE On his return to Persia, Alexander punishes officials who have acted improperly in his absence

328 BCE Murder of **Cleitus the Black**, joint commander of Alexander's Companion Cavalry

326 BCE Alexander crosses the Indus and wins **Battle of Hydaspes**, but his advance is halted when his troops revolt at **Taxila**

326 BCE Death of **Lycurgus**, one of the greatest Athenian orators

325 BCE Alexander's **army retreats** through the Gedrosian desert towards Persepolis

324 BCE Alexander arranges for 90 Macedonian officers to marry the daughters of Persian and Medean nobility

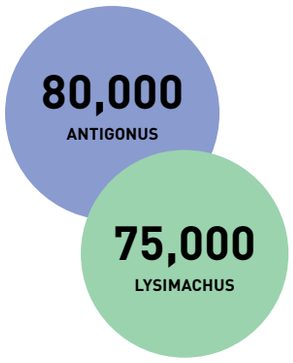
“TO THE **STRONGEST!**”

Alexander the Great, on his deathbed in reply to a question about who would succeed him

Samnite-style helmet
The Romans admired the Samnites as fighters. This gladiator helmet is based on the Samnite style of armour.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT had not provided for an orderly succession after his death in 323 BCE, and his most experienced generals were also dead – except for Antipater who had been left as regent in Macedonia. Alexander's wife Roxane was pregnant, and he had a half-brother Arrhidaeus, who was, unfortunately, mentally unstable. **A clique of generals** who were present at Alexander's deathbed – **Ptolemy**, **Cassander**, **Seleucus**, and **Lysimachus** – engineered a solution by which Roxane's newborn son Alexander IV (323–310 BCE) notionally shared power with Arrhidaeus, who became **Philip III**. In reality, this military clique carved up the empire between themselves and four other generals. **Perdiccas** emerged as the main power in the centre; **Antipater** and **Craterus** took Europe; **Antigonos Monopthalmos** ("the one-eyed") was given Phrygia; **Ptolemy** got Egypt; and **Seleucus** and **Cassander** were promoted to senior military commands.

These generals, who became known as the **Diadochoi** ("successors"), then fought a long series of wars for dominance in Alexander's former empire, at first pitting the others against Perdiccas, who was assassinated in 320 BCE. Antipater rose to power next, but he died of natural causes in 318 BCE, leaving Antigonos to make a bid for power against the four remaining principal players: Cassander in Macedonia, Ptolemy in Egypt, Lysimachus in Thrace, and Seleucus in Babylon. War between the parties raged inconclusively until 311 BCE. But when it was renewed again in 308 BCE, it looked as if Antigonus might overcome all the others. Then, in 301 BCE, **Lysimachus crushed the Antigonid army** at Ipsus, and annexed most of Antigonus's former territories, so cementing a **tripartite division** of Alexander's empire between himself, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.



Battle of Ipsus
Although slightly outnumbered, Lysimachus deployed his archers against his enemy's flank, causing Antigonus's infantry to flee in panic.

In India, in around 320 BCE, **Chandragupta Maurya** (*r.c.*320–297 BCE) overthrew the last of the Nandas (see 370–356 BCE) to become ruler of Magadha and the Ganges plain. An energetic ruler, he then gradually absorbed the outlying regions of the Nanda Empire, pushing his control as far as Gujarat and the Punjab. In 305 BCE, he began a campaign against one of Alexander's successors, **Seleucus**, which ended in a treaty in 303 BCE, by which the Greeks ceded control of eastern Afghanistan and Baluchistan to Chandragupta. Having established the **Mauryan Empire** in 307 BCE, Chandragupta decided to abdicate in favour of his son **Bindusara** (r.297–272 BCE). He then retired to become a Jain monk, ultimately starving himself to death.

In China, **Meng Zi** (or Mencius) (*c.*372–289 BCE) arrived at the Wei court around 320 BCE and rapidly earned himself a reputation as the "second sage" of the **Confucian tradition**. His surviving work, the ***Shi Ji***, is written in the form of dialogues with several contemporary kings. Meng Zi stresses the value of *de* (virtue) for a king and, more practically, recommends lower taxes, less harsh punishments, and ensuring the people have enough to eat. He believed that if a king acted benevolently, everyone would want to be ruled by him, and he would have no need of conquest. Meng Zi's benevolent view of human nature had a widespread appeal, and politically his views were most influential in the time of the **Song dynasty** (960–1279 CE).

ALEXANDER THE GREAT (356–323 BCE)

Aged 20, Alexander inherited much of Greece from his father; by his death just 13 years later, he had extended this to cover a vast area from the Indus River in the east to Illyria in the west. He was a brilliant general but prone to acts of impetuous violence. His adoption of Persian court ritual alienated many native Macedonians, and his not naming an heir proved catastrophic.

323 BCE Alexander dies in Babylon; his empire begins to disintegrate among warring factions

323 BCE Outbreak of the **Lamian (or Hellenic) War** between Athens and her allies and the Macedonians in Thessaly

321 BCE Roman army defeated by Samnites at the **Caudine Forks**

321 BCE Athens defeated by **Antipater**; peace terms entail the end of **Athenian democracy**

320 BCE Ptolemy annexes Judaea and Syria

312 BCE Rome's first aqueduct built by **Appius Claudius**

315 BCE Olympias, the mother of Alexander, murdered

310 BCE Alexander IV, son of Alexander the Great, dies

311 BCE Alexander's successors agree on **division of the empire**

307 BCE Athens falls under **Macedonian** control

308 BCE Last royal burial of a **Kushite king**, Natasen, takes place at Napata

305 BCE Seleucus establishes himself in Persia and Anatolia, founding the **Seleucid Dynasty**

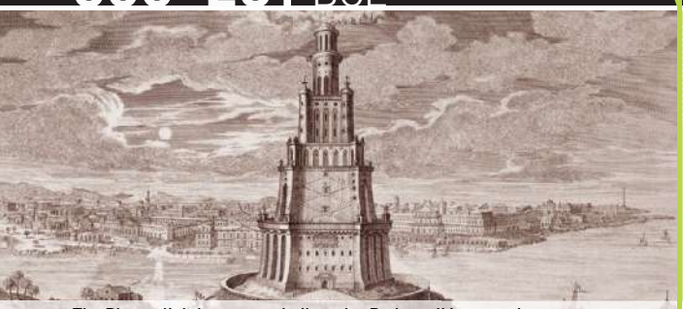
306 BCE **Ptolemy I** of Egypt **defeated** off Salamis (Cyprus) by Greeks under Demetrius

301 BCE At the **Battle of Ipsus**, Lysimachus and Seleucus **defeat Antigonus**, who is killed

304 BCE **Second Samnite War** ends; Rome wins but gains no territory

302 BCE Chandragupta Maurya signs a **peace treaty** with Seleucus

300–281 BCE



The Pharos lighthouse was built under Ptolemy II in around 280 BCE. It guided ships into Alexandria harbour at night.

IN ITALY, A THIRD WAR broke out between the **Romans and Samnites** in 298 BCE, apparently provoked by Samnite harassment of their neighbours, the Lucanians. Despite two Roman victories in 297 BCE, the Samnites, this time allied with the Gauls, could still field a huge army against the Romans at **Sentinum** in 295 BCE.

275

THE NUMBER OF YEARS THE **PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY** RULED EGYPT

The equally vast Roman army – at 45,000, the largest they had ever fielded – was threatened with defeat until the Roman consul **Publius Decius Mus** (d.295 BCE) dedicated himself and the enemy army as sacrificial victims to the gods of the underworld and led a **suicidal charge** that shattered the Samnite line. A string of **Roman successes** followed in 293 and 292 BCE, and two years later the Samnites finally surrendered and their lands were annexed. Roman territory now stretched across the Italian peninsula to the Adriatic Sea.

Demetrius Poliorcetes (*c.*337–283 BCE), the son of Antigonus (see 322–301 BCE), was now rebuilding his strength from bases in the Aegean islands and in Cyprus. He was able to exploit the need of **Seleucus**, in Babylon, for allies against the now over-mighty **Lysimachus**. In 294 BCE, Demetrius **invaded Macedon**, whose ruler Cassander had died three years before, leaving his two young sons to engage in a **bitter civil war**. Demetrius then attacked Lysimachus's Asian territories, but in 292 BCE he was brought back to Greece by a revolt in Aetolia. By 289 BCE, Demetrius had suppressed the revolt, but he had lost most of his island bases to Ptolemy's Egyptian fleet. He retreated to Asia, and died in 283 BCE, a captive of Seleucus.

Of Alexander's successors, Ptolemy inherited the weakest position. A naval defeat in 306 BCE by Demetrius Poliorcetes confined his ambitions temporarily to Egypt. Yet here he shrewdly chose to exploit the existing mechanisms of power, establishing himself as a pharaoh in the old style and setting up an administration that melded the best of Greek and Egyptian traditions. By 295 BCE, Ptolemy's naval forces had recovered and conquered much of the Aegean. In Egypt, Ptolemy's position was sufficiently secure that, at his death in 283 BCE, aged 84, he passed the kingdom on to his son Ptolemy II Philadelphos (r.283–245 BCE), the second king of a Ptolemaic dynasty that would rule Egypt until 30 BCE.

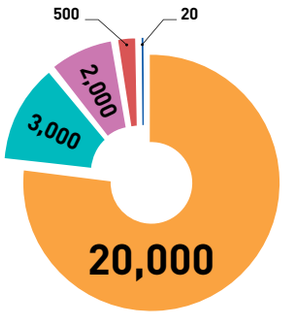
280–266 BCE

> “ANOTHER SUCH VICTORY AND **WE ARE UNDONE.**”
>
> **Pyrrhus, king of the Greek state of Epirus,** 279 BCE

IN 281 BCE, THE APPEAL by envoys from the southern Italian city of Tarentum for protection against the Romans provided **Pyrrhus**, the king of the Greek state of Epirus, with a perfect excuse for fulfilling his ambitions and intervening there. He arrived with an army more than 25,000 strong, including war elephants. He beat the Romans at the **River Siris** in 280 BCE, but the Roman senate refused to make peace. Pyrrhus vanquished another Roman army at **Asculum** the next year, but his losses were so severe that it seemed more like a defeat. After invading Sicily, Pyrrhus retreated back to **Epirus** in 275 BCE, nursing huge losses in troops and having made no territorial gains.

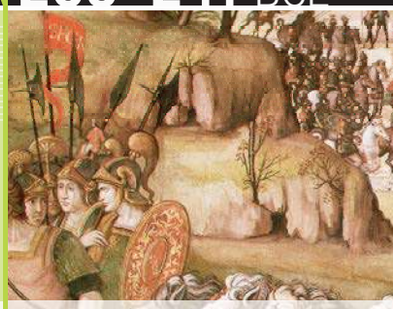
The defeat and **death of Lysimachus** in 281 BCE in battle against Seleucus, and the latter's assassination, soon led to instability on the frontier between the **Seleucid Empire** (now ruled by his son Antiochus I) and the Egyptian ruler **Ptolemy II Philadelphos**. Finally, in 274 BCE the **First Syrian War** broke out between them. The Egyptians emerged victorious, annexing parts of the Syrian coast and southern Anatolia. This position was in part reversed by Egyptian losses in the **Second Syrian War** (260–253 BCE) and then renewed in the **Third Syrian War** (246–241 BCE), which was fought between the Seleucid **Antiochus II** and **Ptolemy III**. These three debilitating wars left the Seleucids particularly vulnerable to the now growing power of **Parthia**.

Pyrrhus of Epirus
Despite his many campaigns, when Pyrrhus died he ruled little more than the kingdom he had inherited.



Pyrrhus's army
The army that Pyrrhus took over to Italy included a small number of war elephants whose presence caused the Roman cavalry to panic and flee.

265–241 BCE



At the Battle of Mylae, in 260 BCE, Rome defeated the Carthaginian navy.

IN INDIA, the accession of **Ashoka** (*c.*294–232 BCE) to the throne in 268 BCE had marked a watershed for the **Mauryan Empire**. On his father Bindusara's death (see 322–301 BCE), Ashoka had to fight a four-year **civil war** with his brothers before he was enthroned. Around eight years later, he launched a campaign against **Kalinga** (modern Orissa), which was so bloody that around 100,000 people are said to have died. So struck with remorse was Ashoka at this slaughter, that he ever after rejected war and promoted the Buddhist concept of **dharma**, meaning mercy or piety. He set up a series of edicts carved in rock throughout the empire – many of them on pillars topped with a lion – promoting his adherence to dharma. Under his patronage the **Third Buddhist Council** met at Pataliputra around 250 BCE, and Ashoka sought to export his ideas abroad, exchanging diplomatic missions with foreign rulers, such as **Antiochus II of Syria** and **Ptolemy II of Egypt**. At his death in 232 BCE, the Mauryan empire had reached its greatest extent and seemed securely established.

In China, **Zhao Zheng** succeeded his father to the throne of Qin in 246 BCE. From 228 BCE, ably advised by **chancellor Li Si**, Zhao Zheng unleashed a final war of conquest against the remaining **Warring States** (see 370–356 BCE). Zhao and Yan soon fell to his forces, the Qin armies captured Wei and, in 223 BCE, overcame Chu. Only Qi still held out but, in 221 BCE, Zhao Zheng finally annexed it, leaving

300 BCE Hopewell culture established in eastern North America

300 BCE Appearance of **coinage** in Celtic areas of Europe

300 BCE City of **Antioch founded** by Seleucus I

298 BCE Samnites attack Roman territory, starting **Third Samnite War** (to 290 BCE)

297 BCE Bindusara expands **Mauryan territory** in India

286 BCE Beginning of an era of **Qin expansion** in China

287 BCE China's northern states begin to build a protective **"Great Wall"**

281 BCE Romans defeat Gallic people known as the **Senones**; Rome now rules over all of northern Italy

285 BCE Ptolemy I of Egypt abdicates in favour of his son, **Ptolemy II Philadelphos**

280 BCE Seleucus Nicator, last surviving general of Alexander the Great and ruler of Syria, assassinated

280 BCE Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, sends troops to help defend Greek cities of southern Italy against Romans

274 BCE First Syrian War between Ptolemy II and Antiochus I (to 271 BCE)

272 BCE Celts sack Delphi in Greece

273 BCE Pyrrhus **invades Macedonia** and deposes Antigonus II

268 BCE Reign of **Ashoka** begins in India (to 232 BCE)

272 BCE Pyrrhus is **killed** campaigning against Sparta

c.268–260 BCE Ashoka fights bloody war against **Kalinga**

264 BCE Outbreak of **First Punic War** between Rome and Carthage (to 241)

263 BCE Eumenes, establishes **Pergamum** as independent kingdom

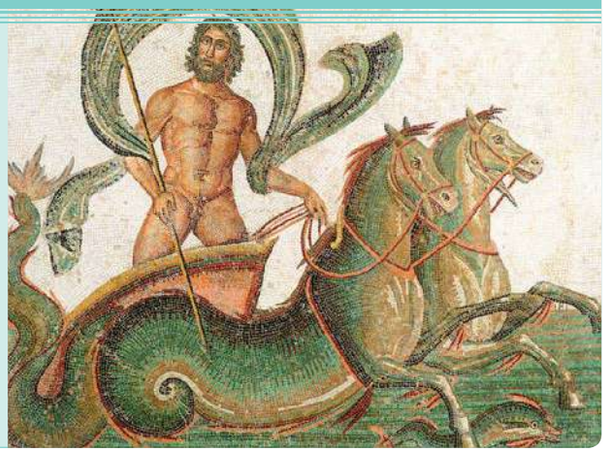
262 BCE After long siege, **Athens falls** to the Macedonians

262 BCE Ashoka converts to **Buddhism**

23 YEARS THE LENGTH OF THE FIRST PUNIC WAR

ROMAN RELIGION

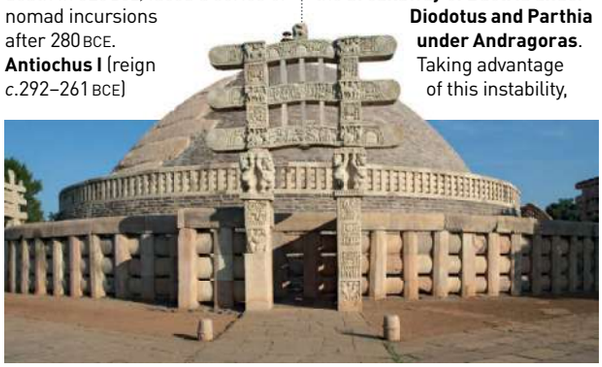
Early Roman religion combined the worship of the great gods, such as Neptune (shown here), with that of more local deities. There were several different types of priest: *haruspices* made predictions from the entrails of sacrificed animals; *augures* determined the divine will from signs, such as the flight of birds; and *pontifices* controlled the complex calendar of religious festivals. In their homes, Romans had shrines to household gods and the spirits of their ancestors.



him the master of all China. The same year he proclaimed himself the "First Emperor" as Qin Shi Huangdi, and the first ruler of the new **Qin dynasty**.

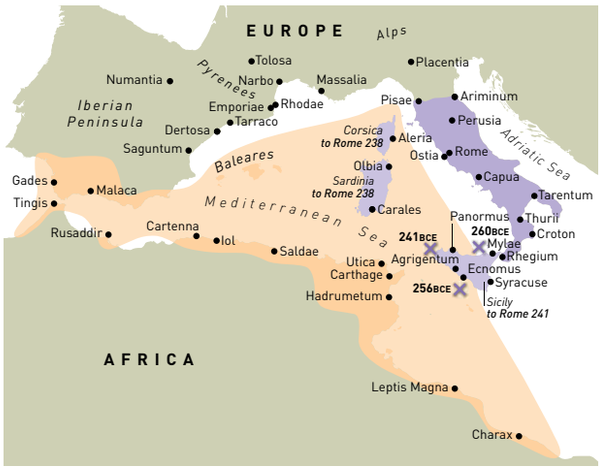
In Persia, the Greek Seleucid dynasty, which had inherited the region after Alexander the Great's death in 323 BCE, faced a series of nomad incursions after 280 BCE. **Antiochus I** (reign *c.*292–261 BCE) expelled the nomads, but wars with Egypt (280–272 BCE and 260–253 BCE) overstretched the kingdom's resources. On the death of **Antiochus II** (r.261–246 BCE), civil war broke out between the king's widow Berenice and his former wife Laodice. This led to the **breakaway of Bactria under Diodotus and Parthia under Andragoras**. Taking advantage of this instability, the nomadic Parni, led by **Arsaces**, entered Parthia in the mid-240s BCE.

Rivalry over Sicily, where the Carthaginians had possessed colonies since the 8th century BCE, was at the root of the **First Punic War** (264–241 BCE), a conflict between Rome and the North African power of Carthage. In 264 BCE, the Romans sent an army to help the **Mamertines** – a group of south-Italian mercenaries occupying the Sicilian city of Messana – in their conflict with the city of Syracuse, which was in turn aided by Carthage. The Carthaginian's resistance was so stubborn that the Romans made little headway. However, after they had built their first ever fleet, the Romans' fortunes changed. In 260 BCE, they won an important victory over the Carthaginians at **Mylae**. A Roman invasion of North Africa in 256 BCE failed to capture Carthage only through the ineptitude of the consul, Regulus. On land, the Romans took the Carthaginian strongholds in Sicily one by one until, by 249 BCE, only **Drepana**, in western Sicily, held out against them. A massive **Carthaginian naval victory** there set back the Roman cause, but in 241 BCE, a new Roman fleet appeared off Drepana, took it, and the next year smashed a Carthaginian fleet at the **Aegades Islands**. This defeat caused **Hamilcar Barca**, the Carthaginian general, to sue for peace. The peace terms involved the Carthaginians leaving Sicily. The two sides' spheres of influence remained uncomfortably overlapping, creating the seeds of two future conflicts.



Great Stupa at Sanchi
This Buddhist stupa in central India was begun by the Mauryan ruler Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE.

> "IF THEY **WILL NOT EAT**, LET THEM **DRINK!**"
>
> **Publius Claudius Pulcher, Roman consul and general**, ordering the drowning of the sacred chickens when they refused to eat grain before the Battle of Drepana, 249 BCE



KEY
- Carthaginian Empire in 264 BCE
- Roman gains by 264 BCE
- Roman gains by 238 BCE
- × Roman victory

The First Punic War
The two decades of fighting was concentrated around Sicily, but also saw Roman invasions of North Africa and Sardinia.

261 BCE Romans use captured Carthaginian vessel as model to **build their own fleet**

260 BCE Romans capture **Corsica**

257 BCE State of **Au Lac** established in Red River basin (in modern Vietnam); succeeded by **Nam Viet** in 207 BCE

256 BCE Romans win naval victory over Carthaginians off **Ecnomus**

255 BCE Roman invasion of Carthaginian territory in **North Africa** ends in defeat

c.250 BCE Romans lay siege to Carthaginian stronghold of **Lilybaeum** in Sicily

249 BCE Carthaginians defeat Romans at naval **Battle of Drepana**

246 BCE King Tissa of **Sri Lanka** converts to Buddhism

c.245 BCE **Arsaces** founds Arsacid (or Parthian) dynasty

246 BCE **Third Syrian War** breaks out between Ptolemies and Seleucids

241 BCE Romans win **naval victory** against Carthage at Aegades Islands

260 BCE Roman **naval victory** over Carthaginians at **Mylae**

260 BCE Start of **Second Syrian War** between Ptolemies and Seleucids (to 254 BCE)

256 BCE Qin takes Luoyang area in China; **Zhou dynasty ends**

254 BCE War between **Seleucids** and **Ptolemies** over possession of Syria concluded by a marriage alliance

c.250 BCE **Zheng** (later **Shi Huangdi**) becomes ruler of Qin domain

247 BCE **Hamilcar Barca** begins Carthaginian offensive in Sicily

c.245 BCE **Bactrian Kingdom** becomes independent from Seleucid empire

243 BCE The **Peloponnese** liberated from Macedonian dominion by **Aratus of Sicyon**

241 BCE Rome now controls Sicily and **First Punic War** ends

36 THE NUMBER OF COMMANDERIES (REGIONS) SET UP BY EMPEROR QIN SHI HUANGDI

IN 221 BCE, QIN SHI HUANGDI, the first emperor of China, divided his empire into 36 commanderies on the advice of his minister **Li Ssu**. The dispossessed aristocrats and nobles of Qin's former enemies were moved to the capital Xianyang to keep them under close control. To further encourage a sense of unity, Li Ssu commissioned a single script and a standardized system of weights and measures for China. Further conquests were made to the north and south in 219 and 214 BCE, and thousands of colonists were sent to the new territories. Shi Huangdi dealt firmly with opposition. In 213 BCE, he ordered the "**burning of the books**", by which the writings of philosophers opposed to the Qin state were burnt, and in 212 BCE he had many intellectuals who opposed him brutally killed.

Suppressing opposition
This watercolour-on-silk painting shows Shi Huangdi, China's first emperor, overseeing the burning of books and the execution of scholars.

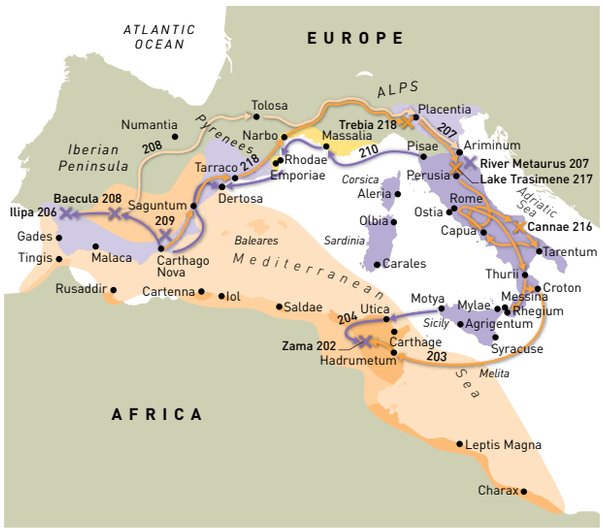
In the aftermath of the **First Punic War** (see 264–241 BCE), with Sicily and Sardinia lost, Carthage turned its attention to **Spain**. In 238 BCE, **Hamilcar** was sent there, and he soon conquered almost the whole of southern Spain. He died in battle against the **Oretani**, a Celtic tribe, in 229 BCE, but by then he had won both a **new empire** for Carthage and a strong power base for his family, the **Barcids**.

Despite their victory in the First Punic War, the Romans' position in northern Italy was still weak. In 225 BCE, the Celtic **Insubres and Boii tribes** tried to drive them out. At the **Battle of Telamon**, the Celts were trapped between two Roman armies and routed. Although the Boii accepted defeat in 224 BCE and the Insubres sued for peace two years later, the Romans rebuffed them and pushed on for total victory. The king of the Boii was killed in single combat against a Roman consul, and their capital **Mediolanum** (Milan) captured. The Romans established colonies in the Celtic territories in 218 BCE, including at Piacenza.

A revolt led by **Arsaces** (see 265–241 BCE) in Parthava – a former satrapy in the northeast of the Seleucid Empire – could not be quelled by Seleucus II (r.246–225 BCE), and a separate **Parthian kingdom emerged** in the region of modern Iran. The Parthians gradually annexed more territory to the west, especially under **Mithridates I** (r.171–138 BCE). By the early 1st century BCE, only a small area of Syria was under Seleucid control.

This rendition of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps is attributed to Italian artist Jacopo Ripanda. Amazingly, all 37 elephants survived the mountain passage.

Second Punic War
There were three principal theatres of conflict: Spain, Italy, and North Africa. By 203 BCE, the Carthaginians were confined to Africa.



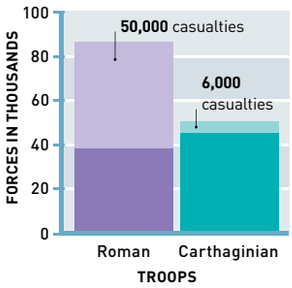
THE SECOND PUNIC WAR 218–202 BCE

- Carthaginian Empire 281 BCE
- Carthaginian territory 200 BCE
- Roman territory 218 BCE
- Roman gains by 200 BCE
- Massalian territory 218 BCE
- Carthaginian victory
- Roman victory
- Hannibal (219–202)
- Hasdrubal (208–207
- Scipio Africanus (210–206 and 204–202)

ALARMED AT CARTHAGINIAN EXPANSION IN SPAIN, in 226 BCE the Romans sent an embassy to **Hasdrubal** – son of Hamilcar and the new Barcid commander there – and secured an agreement that the Carthaginians would not move north of the Ebro River. In return, the Romans pledged not to move south – although they did forge alliances with cities in the south, such as Saguntum. In 221 BCE, Hasdrubal was assassinated; two years later, **Hannibal**, his brother and successor, attacked Saguntum, rapidly leading to the **Second Punic War** (219–201 BCE).

With the prospect of the Romans sending one army to Spain and another via Sicily to invade North Africa, Hannibal decided to strike first. He marched with 50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and 37 elephants into northern Spain, across the Pyrenees, through southern Gaul and – to the Romans' astonishment – **crossed the Alps**. Although he now had only around half the force he had started with, his presence encouraged the north Italian Celts to revolt and, at **Trebia** in late 218 BCE, he routed a Roman army. The following year he smashed another large Roman force at **Lake Trasimene**, killing 15,000 Romans – including one of the consuls. Faced with many **defections** among the allied cities, the Romans turned to delaying tactics to hold Hannibal at bay. But this was a temporary measure, and the Romans suffered one of their worst ever defeats at **Cannae** in 216 BCE, when Hannibal's army massacred up to

Battle of Canae
Some 35,000 Romans survived the battle of Cannae, but half of those were captured by the Carthaginians, and many were sold into slavery.



238 BCE Hamilcar Barca re-establishes Carthaginian rule in Spain

231 BCE Seleucus II defeated by Tiridates of Parthia

225 BCE Gallic tribes defeated by Romans at **Telamon**

223 BCE **Antiochus III** ascends to Seleucid throne

221 BCE The first emperor (Shi Huangdi) unites China under the **Qin Dynasty**

232 BCE **Mauryan Empire** starts to break up after Ashoka's death

222 BCE Gallic stronghold of **Mediolanum** (Milan) taken by the Romans

221 BCE Hannibal becomes **Carthaginian commander** in Spain

220 BCE Philip V becomes **king of Macedonia**

219 BCE **Fourth Syrian War** breaks out between Ptolemies and Seleucids over possession of Phoenecia

218 BCE Hannibal **crosses the Alps** to invade Italy

217 BCE Egyptians, led by Ptolemy IV Philopator, **crush the Seleucid army** under Antiochus III at Raphia, Palestine

215 BCE Romans counterattack against the Carthaginians in Spain

212 BCE **Antiochus III** campaigns in the east in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer **Bactria** and **Parthia**

219 BCE Hannibal besieges Saguntum in Spain, beginning the **Second Punic War**

217 BCE Hannibal triumphs over the Romans at **Lake Trasimene**

216 BCE Hannibal defeats the Romans at **Cannae**

215 BCE Philip V of Macedonia invades Illyria, starting the **First Macedonian War** (to 205 BCE)

212 BCE In China, the Qin **ban non-scientific books**; standardization and simplification of **Chinese script**

210–201 BCE

After his death, the First Qin Emperor was buried in a vast mausoleum, in which an army of 8,000 terracotta warriors, each around 2 m (6 ft 6 in) tall, was placed.

HANNIBAL (247–182 BCE)

A brilliant tactician, Hannibal's string of victories against the Romans from 218 BCE was not matched by the strategic judgement to convert them into final victory. Following the surrender of Carthage in 201 BCE, Hannibal served as the city's suffete (chief magistrate) until the Romans had him exiled in 195 BCE. He then offered his service to a succession of Rome's enemies before poisoning himself in Bithynia.

50,000 of them. But Hannibal did not march immediately on Rome, and his campaign lost momentum. Although Hannibal captured much of southern Italy, including the key city of Capua in 211 BCE, by 212 BCE the Romans had raised 25 fresh legions and stood ready to carry the war back to the Carthaginians.

WHEN THE FIRST QIN EMPEROR DIED IN 210 BCE, resentment against his autocratic rule erupted in a series of peasant revolts. A number of new kingdoms broke away from the centre, while the anti-Qin forces found a talented military leader in **Xiang Yu**. In 208 BCE, Li Ssu was executed and a new army, led by **Liu Bang**, a man of peasant origins, emerged to challenge the Qin. By 206 BCE, the **Qin Empire** was fragmented and Xiang Yu and Liu Bang were at war with one another. In 202 BCE, Xiang Yu committed suicide after being defeated at **Gaixia**. With no one left to oppose him, Liu Bang had himself declared emperor as **Gaozu**, the first ruler of the **Han dynasty** (see 200–171 BCE).

With Hannibal making little headway in **southern Italy**, the Romans embarked on a policy of picking off the allies of Carthage. Their first target was **Philip V of Macedonia**, whose attacks on Illyria in 215 BCE had provoked the **First Macedonian War** (215–205 BCE) with Rome. In 211 BCE, the Romans allied with the Aetolians, who fought the Macedonians on land while the Romans launched naval attacks. Philip's invasion of **Aetolia** in 207 BCE forced the Aetolians to sue for peace the next year, and though the Romans sent fresh forces in 205 BCE, the war ended with a recognition of the **status quo** between the two sides.

In Spain, the Romans had retaken **Saguntum** in 212 BCE, but a disastrous defeat the following year in which both consuls died looked set to destroy the Roman position there. The Roman senate sent the young general **Publius Cornelius Scipio** (*c.*236–183 BCE) to Spain, where he captured the Carthaginian capital of **Carthage Nova**. In 206 BCE, he crushed a large Carthaginian force at **Illipa**.

In 207 BCE, Hannibal's brother **Hasdrubal** was defeated and **killed** at the **River Metaurus** in northern Italy, denying Hannibal crucial reinforcements. By 204 BCE, many of Hannibal's south-Italian allies had deserted him, and when Scipio landed with a Roman army at **Utica** in North Africa, the Carthaginians recalled Hannibal to head off a threat to **Carthage** itself. The Romans offered relatively lenient peace terms, but the Carthaginians rejected them, and Scipio captured their towns one by one. Aided by the Numidian prince, Massinissa, **Scipio defeated Hannibal's last army** at Zama in 202 BCE. The peace terms the Carthaginians now had to accept were much harsher. All of their territory was forfeit save a band around Carthage itself; their fleet was reduced to a mere 10 ships; they were not allowed to make war outside Africa at all, and inside it they needed Roman permission to do so. An annual tribute of 10,000 talents payable to the Romans completed the humiliation of what had once been Rome's greatest enemy.

The Continence of Scipio
Scipio was noted for his mercy. In this 19th-century painting, he is seen handing back a captured Carthaginian woman to her fiancé.

212 BCE Numidian chiefs declare war on Carthage; they are put down by Hasdrubal

211 BCE Romans capture the city of **Syracuse** in Sicily

211 BCE Hannibal **marches on Rome**, capturing Capua and Syracuse; **Scipio Africanus** defeats Hasdrubal in Spain

210 BCE Revolts in Qin Empire after death of **Shi Huangdi**

209 BCE Romans **capture Tarentum** in south Italy

207 BCE Hasdrubal's attempt to reinforce Hannibal in Italy fails; he is defeated by the Romans at Metaurus and killed

206 BCE Roman general Scipio concludes a successful military campaign against the Carthaginians in **Iberia**

206 BCE End of Qin dynasty; Liu Bang proclaims himself emperor of a new dynasty, the **Han**

205 BCE At the Treaty of Phoenice, Rome and Macedonia agree that **Illyria** will be a **shared protectorate**

204 BCE Roman forces, under Scipio, invade Africa

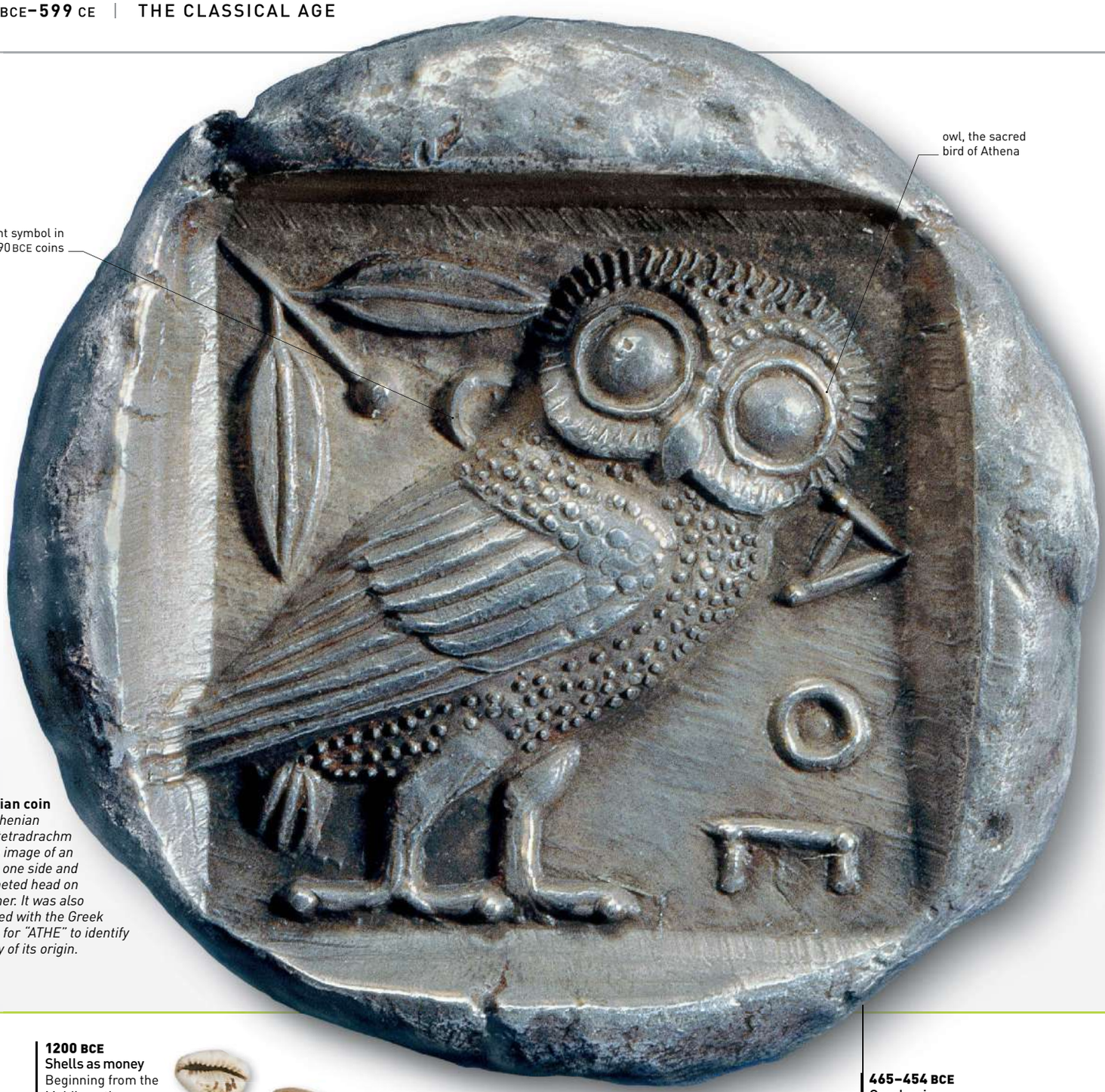
203 BCE Hannibal recalled from Italy to **defend Carthage** against the Romans

202 BCE Scipio defeats Hannibal at **Battle of Zama**

202 BCE After a brief period at Luoyang, Chinese emperor Liu Bang sets up his capital at **Chang'an**

202 BCE Seleucid king **Antiochus III** seizes Ptolemaic-held Syria

201 BCE The Carthaginians surrender to Rome, ending the **Second Punic War**



Athenian coin
The Athenian silver tetradrachm has an image of an owl on one side and a helmeted head on the other. It was also stamped with the Greek letters for "ATHE" to identify the city of its origin.

Prehistory
Cattle as capital
Prehistoric people use cattle as money, with animals such as sheep or chickens sometimes acting as small change.

Cattle

1200 BCE
Shells as money
Beginning from the Maldives, the use of cowrie shells as money spreads throughout the Pacific, and, by the 19th century, into Africa.

Cowrie shells

1000–500 BCE
Tool money
In China, common tools are cast in metal, punched with holes (for stringing several together), and used as money.

Knife money

***c.*640–630 BCE**
First true coins
The state of Lydia produces the first true coins, made of electrum (an alloy of gold and silver) and stamped with an image of a lion or stag.

Lydian coins

465–454 BCE
Greek coins
Almost every Greek city-state issues its own coinage, often with the name of the state inscribed on it. Silver replaces electrum as the main metal used.

Gold aureus

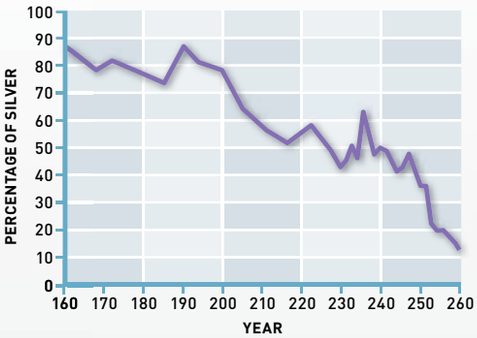
27 BCE–14 CE
Augustan aureus
Emperor Augustus reforms the Roman coinage system and issues a new version of the standard gold coin, the aureus, worth 25 silver denarii.

THE STORY OF MONEY

THE ADOPTION OF MONEY ENABLED EARLY SOCIETIES TO FLOURISH AND GROW INTO COMPLEX CIVILIZATIONS

As societies became more complex, a need arose for a uniform medium of exchange to acquire goods. Money was created to fulfil this role, and it evolved from cattle to precious metals, and finally, to coins and notes. Today, money is exchanged more abstractly, through credit cards or electronic transfers.

The earliest forms of money – used in ritual exchanges (for example, as a dowry) and in paying fines – included physical items such as cattle. In the 4th millennium BCE, the growth of trade in Egypt and Mesopotamia led to more compact and portable forms of money. For thousands of years, precious metals were used, often in the forms of bars and ingots. Babylonian king Hammurabi's law code mentions loans paid in silver. In 640 BCE, in the kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, the development of money went a stage further with the invention of coinage, which later spread to the Greek world. By the Roman era, a tri-metallic system had been adopted, with coins of gold, silver, and bronze (of least value) circulating across the empire. All had the head of the ruler stamped on them, for propaganda as well as fiscal use.



The debasement of Roman coins
Due to inflation, excessive expenditure, and weak control of minting, the purity of the Roman denarius fell from around 90 per cent silver under Marcus Aurelius (r.161–180) to 4 per cent during Gallienus's rule (r.260–268).

EXCHANGE NOTES

In 1189, paper money came into use in China during Jin rule. Notes could express larger denominations and, therefore, were more convenient than coins. Gradually, government-backed banks began to issue notes, which were, in theory, exchangeable for an equivalent amount in bullion (a system known as the Gold Standard). However, the economic crisis following World War I forced countries to abandon the Gold Standard. Subsequently, the "real" value of notes and coins became nominal, relying instead on a sense of trust that they could be exchanged for goods. The growth of credit cards from 1950 took this a stage further, as the purchaser passed on nothing save the promise of payment at a later date.

TRADE AND PAPER MONEY

The growth in paper money in Europe after the Middle Ages was fuelled by the needs of merchants. Traders would deposit funds in a bank in one city and receive a promissory note, which allowed them to withdraw the amount in any other city where the bank had a branch. Great Italian banking houses, such as the Medici, were rich enough to fund the military campaigns of European kings through their loans.

806–821
Paper money
In China, Emperor Xianzong issues the earliest bank notes during a period of copper shortage. The Jin dynasty issues the first true bank notes around 1189.

Song dynasty note

1519
Thalers
Coin minted from silver found in the Joachimsthal mine, Bohemia, becomes standard in the Spanish and Austrian Habsburg empires.

Joachimsthal thaler

1694
First bank note
The Bank of England is founded to fund England's growing national debt. It issues its first bank notes, backed by the bank's own gold reserves.

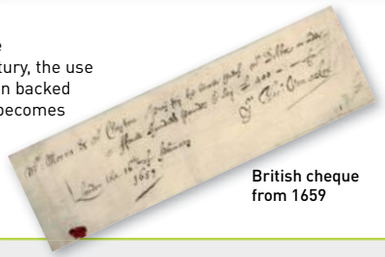
1949
Credit and debit cards
The first credit cards appear in the US in 1949. By the 1980s, debit cards, which operate as electronic cash (without deferred payment) appear.

Credit cards

1158
Making change
Henry II of England creates high-quality coinage, based on a silver penny, with a cross design that will last over the next 100 years.

Henricus penny

17th century
Modern cheque
By the 17th century, the use of cheques, often backed by goldsmiths, becomes widespread in Europe.


British cheque from 1659

1862
First dollar bill
The US Treasury issues the first dollar bills for national circulation. These are known as "greenbacks" for their vivid green colour.

First one dollar bill

200–171 BCE

The royal entourage of Gaozu, the first emperor of the Han, depicted in the mountains of China. Gaozu was one of the few Chinese rulers to come from a peasant background.

THE FIRST HAN EMPEROR OF CHINA, GAOZU, died in 195 BCE, when his successor, Hui Ti, was just 15. Hui Ti fell under the sway of his mother, the empress Lu, who took power for herself on his premature death in 188 BCE. Under her rule **China was invaded** by the Hsiung-nu from the north and the kingdom of Nan-yueh to the south, and it was only under Gaozu's grandson Wen Ti (r.180–157 BCE) that **stability was restored**. By 143 BCE, the number of commanderies (regions) under central Han control had risen from 13 to a total of 40.

In Japan, the **Middle Yayoi** period (*c.*200–100 BCE) saw an increase in population – possibly to as high as 600,000 people – and the beginnings of **political consolidation in central Japan**, especially around the lower Nara basin (near Osaka).

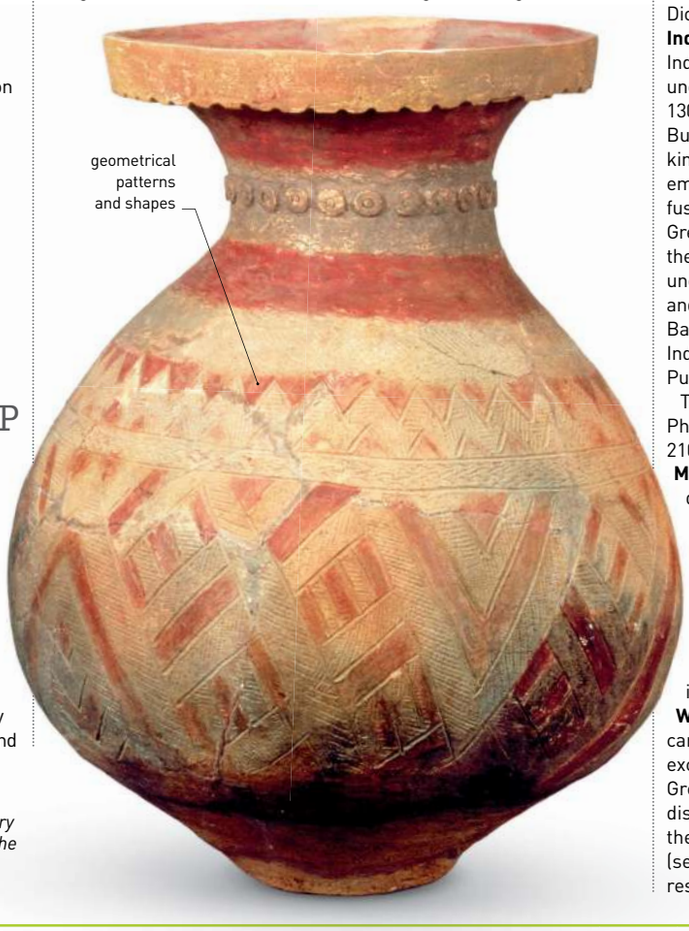
In **India,** the **Sunga dynasty** took power in Magadha in 185 BCE, when its founder Pusyamitra Sunga (r.185–151 BCE), a former Mauryan general, assassinated the last Mauryan ruler (see 265 BCE). He is said to have persecuted Buddhists, marking the beginning of the religion's decline in its Indian homeland. He also fought a **long series of wars** with Magadha's neighbours, including the **Satavahanas,** the **Kalingas,** and the **Indo-Greek** kingdoms of Bactria.

Bactria (in modern Afghanistan) had broken away from Seleucid control around 275 BCE, but a series of Greek kings continued to rule there, starting with Diodotus around 250 BCE. Another **Indo-Greek dynasty** emerged in India, and became powerful under **Menander I** (*c.*165–130 BCE), an important patron of Buddhism. Under the Indo-Greek kings, a new **school of art** emerged around Gandhara, which fused Buddhist iconography and Greek naturalism. Gradually, these easternmost Greeks came under pressure from Scythian and Yuezhi nomads and in 125 BCE Bactria collapsed. The last Indo-Greek kingdom of the Punjab survived until 10 CE.

The Roman victory against Philip V of Macedon (see 210 BCE) in the **Second Macedonian War** (200–197 BCE) did not lead to permanent acquisitions in Greece, and the Romans withdrew their army in 194 BCE. After the death of Philip V in 179 BCE, his son Perseus presided over worsening relations with Rome, and in 171 BCE a **Third Macedonian War** broke out. Initial Roman campaigning achieved little except the alienation of their Greek allies, but a more disciplined approach under the consul **Aemilius Paullus** (see 170 BCE) yielded better results.

13

THE NUMBER OF **REGIONS** THAT MADE UP **HAN CHINA**



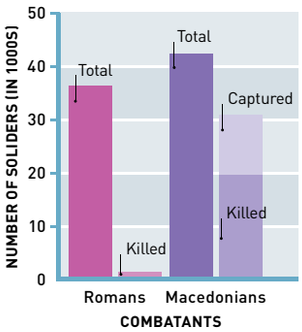
Yayoi vase
The Yayoi period in Japanese history (c.300 BCE to 250 CE) is named for the site near Tokyo where its pottery was first found.

170–147 BCE

This wall painting shows Judah Maccabee's revolt in Jerusalem.

THE THIRD MACEDONIAN WAR ended In 168 BCE, when Paullus defeated Perseus at the **Battle of Pydna.** A purge of anti-Roman elements swept through the Greek cities, and Macedonia was broken up into four republics to prevent it recovering its strength.

In 150 BCE, Spartan attempts to get the Romans to intervene in a quarrel with the **Achaean League** (a group of Greek city-states) coincided with an **anti-Roman revolt** in Macedonia. By 148 BCE, the Macedonians had been defeated and the Romans turned their attention to the Achaeans. The Roman consul L. Mummius quickly routed the Archaeans and took Corinth, which he razed to the ground. The various leagues of Greek cities were dissolved and **Greece lost its independence**, becoming the Roman province of **Achaea**.



Battle of Pydna
The Macedonian army led by Perseus was destroyed at the Battle of Pydna. The Romans killed 20,000 Macedonians and captured 11,000.

c.200 BCE Regional cultures appear in **Central Andes**

200 BCE Antiochus III takes Judaea from Ptolemies

200 BCE Second Macedonian War (to 197 BCE)

197 BCE Foundation of **library** at **Pergamum** in Anatolia

196 BCE Hannibal elected suffete (magistrate) in Carthage and makes reforms to public finances

192 BCE Roman war with **Antiochus III**. He is defeated at Thermopylae and Magnesia (190 BCE)

182 BCE Hannibal commits suicide

180 BCE Wen-ti becomes Chinese emperor. His **23-year reign** provides period of stability

179 BCE Perseus succeeds Philip V as **king of Macedon**

171 BCE Third **Macedonian War** (to 167 BCE)

c.165 BCE First official examination for the selection of Chinese **civil servants**

164 BCE Judah Maccabee enters Jerusalem

c.200 BCE Small communities in Mexico's **Teotihuacan valley** merge to form larger states

196 BCE Rome declares freedom of the Greeks at **Isthmus of Corinth**

193 BCE The **Aetolian League** revolt against Roman rule and ally with Antiochus

191 BCE The most rigorous **Qin laws** are abolished in China

c.181 BCE End of Mauryan and start of **Sunga dynasty** in northern India

177 BCE Advance of **Hsiung-nu nomads** into Henan region of northern China

175 BCE Antiochus IV imposes Greek culture in Judaea, ordering pigs to be sacrificed in Jewish Temple

171 BCE Mithridates I becomes King of **Persia League**

161 BCE Judah Maccabee is **killed in battle**

160 BCE The city of **Pergamum**, ruled by King Eumenes II, becomes a renowned cultural centre

The ruins of Carthage, which was burnt and ritually cursed after its capture in 146 BCE. A new Roman town was founded near the city around 48 BCE.

After the end of the Second Punic War, in 202 BCE, the Romans had allowed their ally King Massinissa of Numidia to encroach on Carthaginian territory. The peace conditions that ended the war forbade the Carthaginians to wage war without Roman approval. Unable to act, the Carthaginians were reduced to sending **embassies to Rome** to protest at Massinissa's behaviour. However, Rome sided with its ally, and one Carthaginian embassy in 162 BCE even resulted in Carthage being made to pay an annual fine of 500 talents. In 151 BCE, the Carthaginian government sent a military force to relieve a town that had been besieged by Massinissa, and the Romans reacted by **declaring war**. This was the **Third Punic War** (149–146 BCE). Rome's war was encouraged by the anti-Carthaginian senator **Cato the Elder**, who made a series of speeches to the Senate calling for the destruction of Carthage. The first two years of the Third Punic war saw ineffective Roman attacks on towns around Carthage. In 147 BCE, a new commander was appointed, **Scipio Aemilianus**, who transformed Rome's fortunes in the war within a year.

> **“ CARTHAGE** MUST BE **DESTROYED. ”**
>
> **Cato the Elder, Roman statesman**

Carthaginean tophet
A memorial stone from the tophet (cemetery) at Carthage, showing Tanit, the goddess of the heavens.

In 167 BCE, the Seleucid ruler **Antiochus IV** outlawed Jewish religious practices in Judaea, leading to the **revolt of Judah Maccabee** and his brothers in 164 BCE. Judah Maccabee entered Jerusalem, reconsecrated the temple, and re-established Judaism. The **Seleucid kingdom** then continued to decline (see also 280 BCE), with the overthrow of its ruler Demetrius I in 150 BCE by Alexander Balas rapidly leading to the **loss of the key satrapies** (provinces) of Media and Susiana.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

After the overthrow of the last king in 507 BCE, Rome became a republic, ruled by two annually elected consuls. Over time the consuls came to be supported by other magistrates (praetors and quaestors), and tribunes of the plebs who had a special role in protecting the rights of the lower orders. Later elections for the consulate became bitterly contested as the office provided great potential for enrichment and personal and family glory. After Augustus became emperor in 27 BCE the office of consul lost any real power, being increasingly awarded to imperial favourites.

> **“** I SHUDDER TO THINK THAT **ONE DAY** SOMEONE MAY GIVE THE SAME ORDER **FOR ROME. ”**
>
> **Scipio Aemilianus, Roman general and consul,** on giving the order to burn Carthage, from Plutarch's *Apophthegmata*

IN CHINA, RAIDS BY NOMADIC HSIUNG-NU TRIBES from 177 BCE gravely threatened the Han dynasty's northern borders. In 139 BCE the imperial envoy, Zhang Qian, set out to Central Asia to seek out **possible allies** against the Hsiung-nu. His epic journey helped scout the way for Chinese expansion as far as Dunhuang, and the foundation of a number of **new Central Asian commanderies** by 104 BCE. Zhang Qian was held captive by the Hsiung-nu for some years during his journey before he was able to make an escape. Under emperor Wu (141–87 BCE) the Chinese launched **several offensives** against the **Hsiung-nu**, particularly in 121 BCE and 119 BCE, after which the frontier was quiet for almost 20 years.

In the Near East, the shrunken and near-helpless **Seleucid realm** (see 170 BCE) was riven by civil wars and prey to interference from the Parthians, the Hasmonaeans, and, increasingly, the Romans. In 142 BCE, the Maccabees succeeded in wresting Jerusalem from Seleucid control and established a **Hasmonaean kingdom**, with Jerusalem as its capital, under which a Jewish dynasty ruled until Jerusalem was captured by the Romans in 63 BCE.

In the **Iberian Peninsula**, the Romans had conquered most of southern Spain and parts of Portugal (where the Lusitanians vigorously resisted them) by 174 BCE. A revolt by the Lusitanian leader Viriathus from 147 BCE was joined by several Celtiberian tribes in 144 BCE. This rebellion petered out after Viriathus was murdered in 140 BCE. In 133 BCE, Numantia, the main centre of the revolt, finally fell to the Romans after a bitter siege. Its population was sold into slavery and Rome was left in control of all of Iberia, except the far north of Spain.

The **Third Punic War** came to an end when Scipio Aemilianus blocked Carthage's harbour then launched a **successful attack** on the city itself in spring 146 BCE. The last Carthaginian defenders died in an inferno in the city's main temple. The defeat of Carthage brought its 118-year struggle against Rome to an end. The Romans burnt the whole city and deported its population to prevent any Carthaginian revival.

155 BCE Beginning of reign of Indo-Greek king **Menander** in Bactria

155 BCE Romans invade **Dalmatia**

153 BCE **Cato** starts a series of speeches in Senate at Rome calling for **destruction of Carthage**

c.150 BCE **Great Serpent Mound** in Ohio, North America is built

148 BCE Roman victory in **Fourth Macedonian War**

146 BCE Rome creates province of **Africa** from former Carthaginian possessions

146 BCE Roman army in alliance with the **Achaean League** takes and destroys city of Corinth. Greece comes under Roman rule

155 BCE **Athens** sends representatives of its three great **schools of philosophy** on mission to Rome

151 BCE **Massinissa invades Carthaginian** territory

149 BCE **Third Punic War** begins (to 146 BCE)

146 BCE Mithridates I lays foundations of **Parthian empire**

c.146 BCE **Eudoxus of Cyzicus** sails from Black Sea to West Africa

146 BCE **Scythian** warriors invade **Bactria**

145 BCE **Demetrius II** kills Alexander Balas, pretender to the Seleucid throne, and becomes king

141 BCE Han emperor **Wudi** comes to throne. He makes administrative reforms and expands into central Asia

138 BCE Embassy of **Zhang Qian** to Hsiung-nu and Central Asia

134 BCE Slave revolt in Sicily, the **First Servile War** (to 132 BCE)

133 BCE Liberal social reforms by tribune of the plebs **Tiberius Gracchus** lead to his murder

141 BCE Parthians control **Mesopotamia**

136 BCE **Confucianism** becomes state religion of China

133 BCE Romans take Iberian city of **Numantia** after long siege

131 BCE Roman army sent to Pergamum to quell unrest following **slave revolt** led by Aristonicus, the pretender to the throne

130–111 BCE

> HOWEVER MUCH YOU MAY **TRY TO DELAY,** YOU ARE **FATED TO MEET** THE **SAME DEATH** AS I DID.

Tiberius Gracchus, Roman official, speaking in a dream to his brother Gaius; from an account by Cicero

SAKA (SCYTHIAN) TRIBESMEN invaded Punjab, northern India, in **about 125 BCE**. They gradually **occupied more territory**, ending a brief period of Indo-Greek unity (see 200–171 BCE) under the reign of Antialcidas around 110 BCE. Led by **King Maues**, the Sakas took the kingdom of Gandhara and its capital Taxila in about 80 BCE. After Maues died (*c.*60 BCE), the Saka kingdom collapsed, but it was revived under his son **Azes I** (r.58–*c.*30 BCE), who conquered much of northwest India. The Sakas held this region until the rise of the Kushan Empire during the 1st century CE.

Amravati relief carving
This carving depicts the life of the Buddha. It comes from Amravati in Andra Pradesh, southeast India, one of the capitals of the Satavahanas.

In southern and central India, the **Satavahanas** began their rise to power after the breakup of the **Mauryan Empire** in the 2nd century BCE (see 200–171 BCE). From his capital in the Deccan, the third Satavahana king, **Satakarni**, extended his sway considerably around 50 BCE, although he and later Satavahana rulers struggled to contain the Saka and Kushan threats from the northwest.

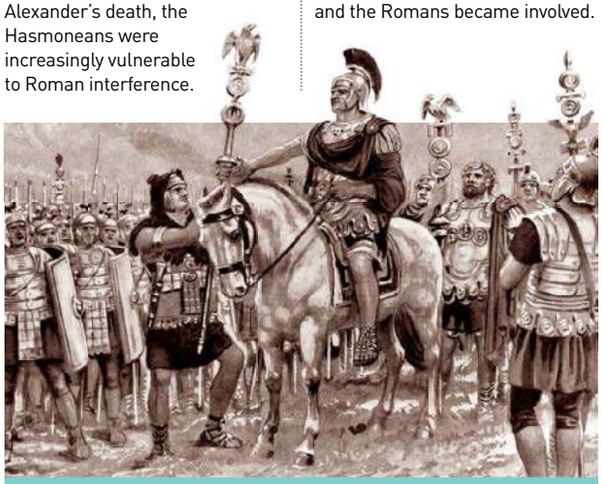
In **Rome**, social turmoil had erupted over the distribution of public land held by the Senate. **Tiberius Gracchus**, who was tribune of the plebs in 133 BCE, sought to ensure that plots of this land would be handed over to poorer families. When the Senate obstructed his plans, he tried to extend his tribunate so that he could pursue his aim. A **mob organized by senators** opposed to the plans beat him to death in the Forum. Tiberius's brother **Gaius became tribune in 123 BCE** and tried to carry on his brother's work. He also reduced the Senate's role in dispensing justice, and pushed through a law to allow the sale of subsidized grain to the poor. In 122 BCE, the Senate declared **Gaius an enemy of the state**, due to his plans to extend Roman citizenship more widely in Italy. He killed himself, and thousands of his political supporters were executed.

110–91 BCE

This 17th-century silk painting from a history of Chinese emperors shows the Emperor Wudi greeting a scholar.

IN PALESTINE, THE HASMONEAN KINGDOM (see 146–131 BCE) had continued its expansion until the **fall of Jerusalem** to the Seleucid Antiochus VII in 131 BCE. However, during the reign of John Hyrcanus (r.134–104 BCE) it recovered much of the ground that had been lost. **Alexander Jannaeus** (r.103–76 BCE) enlarged the kingdom until it occupied most of modern Israel and the West Bank. After defeats by the Nabataean king Aretas III in 84 BCE and internal strife following Alexander's death, the Hasmoneans were increasingly vulnerable to Roman interference.

In **North Africa**, the Romans faced a serious challenge when Micipsa, the son of their former ally Massinissa of Numidia (see 170–147 BCE), died in 118 BCE. The Romans ordered the kingdom be divided between Micipsa's nephew **Jugurtha** and his sons. Jugurtha rejected this, killing one cousin and attacking the other, Adherbal, who fled to Rome. After a brief division of Numidia between Jugurtha and Adherbal, Jugurtha renewed his attack on his cousin and the Romans became involved.



ROMAN MILITARY REFORMS

By the late 2nd century BCE, the Roman army was experiencing difficulty recruiting from the traditional propertied classes. Gaius Marius changed this by opening the army to those who fell below the normal property qualification. The eagle became the universal legionary standard for the first time, and the legions themselves were reformed as a heavy infantry force. From this point onward Roman light infantry and cavalry were organized into "auxiliary" units, which were recruited from non-citizens.

> YOU DO WELL TO **CONSIDER THE OFFICE YOUR OWN,** FOR **YOU BOUGHT IT.**

Julius Caesar's father chastising the future dictator Sulla for having corruptly bought office in 94 BCE; from *Lives* by **Plutarch**

Following several disastrous years of campaigning from 111 BCE, the Romans sent **Quintus Caecilius Metellus**, who captured Jugurtha's strongholds one by one. In **108 BCE**, **Gaius Marius** replaced Metellus. Finally, trapped in the far west of his territory, Jugurtha was handed to the Romans by his father-in-law **Bocchus of Mauretania**.

In Gaul, two Germanic tribes, the **Cimbri** and **Teutones**, had been defeating the Romans since 107 BCE, notably at Arausio in 105 BCE, where **Roman losses** reached 80,000. Marius took command of the defence against the Germans on his return from North Africa, and in 102 BCE vanquished the Teutones at Aquae Sextiae in Gaul. He next crushed the Cimbri at the **Battle of Vercellae** in 101 BCE. He was rewarded with an unprecedented sixth consulship in 100 BCE.

In China, **Emperor Wudi** (r.141–87 BCE) strengthened the **Han Empire's** administrative

129 BCE Romans regain control of **Pergamum** and establish province of Asia
128 BCE Rise of **Satavahana** dynasty in India
126 BCE Anti-Roman revolt in **Sardinia**
c.125 BCE **Sakas** invade Punjab
123 BCE In Rome, **Gaius Gracchus** is elected tribune of the plebs (killed during rioting in 121 BCE)
123 BCE **Mithridates II** becomes **ruler of Parthia**
118 BCE **Jugurtha** becomes **ruler** of **Numidia**
112 BCE Start of war between Romans and **Jugurtha** of Numidia
111 BCE Chinese **Han dynasty** conquers **Annam**
c.110 BCE **Silk Road** established across Central Asia
108 BCE **Gaius Marius** elected **consul** and commander of Roman forces against Jugurtha
108 BCE **Han Chinese** defeat Korea and occupy north of country
105 BCE Cimbri and Teutones defeat the Romans at **Arausio**
107 BCE **Civil war in Egypt** as Alexander, Egyptian governor of Cyprus, expels his brother Ptolemy IX
104 BCE Marius **reforms** the Roman **army**
105 BCE Roman general **Marius defeats Jugurtha**
102 BCE Romans defeat the **Teutones** at Aquae Sextiae
103 BCE Romans suppress **slave revolt in Sicily**
101 BCE Chinese Han conquer **Tarim basin** and **Ferghana** in Central Asia
101 BCE Romans defeat the Cimbri at **Vercellae**
c.100 BCE Height of **Adena culture** in Ohio
c.100 BCE **Khoisan herders** spread to southern Africa

Maiden Castle hill-fort in Britain underwent several phases of rebuilding after it was begun around 600 BCE, reaching its final form about 500 years later.

Captured in stone
The Danzante carvings at Monte Alban, Mexico, were once thought to be of dancers, but they are now believed to represent the mutilated bodies of enemies captured in war.

system by beginning **civil service examinations**. Official positions for academics had been established in 136 BCE, consolidating the ruling house's stranglehold on the intellectual life of China. In 106 BCE, **Wudi appointed 13 regional inspectors** to monitor the behaviour of government officials, raised taxes, and forbade private coin-minting. His armies pushed deep into Central Asia. By 108 BCE, the Han Empire had reached its **largest extent**.

In **Mexico**, the population of **Monte Albán** had reached about 17,000 by around 100 BCE. Monte Albán's control began to reach beyond the immediate vicinity of the **Valley of Oaxaca**, and many large stone platforms and public monuments were built in the city.

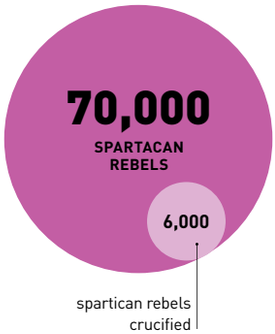
AFTER HIS VICTORY AT VERCELLAE, (see 110–91 BCE) Marius became Rome's dominant politician, but the brutal behaviour of his ally Saturninus, tribune of the plebs, provoked the Senate. **Political violence** flared, and in 100 BCE Marius had to march an army into Rome. Saturninus was killed in the ensuing riot. As Marius's power waned, discontent rose among Italians without Roman citizenship. In 91 BCE, this erupted into the **Social War**. A protégé of Marius, **Lucius Sulla** (*c.*138–78 BCE), took a key role in suppressing the revolt, which was **largely over by 88 BCE**, albeit with some concessions offered by Rome to the rebels.

Sulla was elected consul in 88 BCE. That same year, while waiting to sail with his army to Greece to counter the threat posed by the king of Pontus, **Mithridates VI** (134–63 BCE), Sulla heard that the Senate had voted to put Marius in charge of the campaign. Enraged, Sulla entered Rome with his troops and siezed power. He moved against Mithridates in 89 BCE, and had driven him out of Greece by 84 BCE. Sulla returned to Rome, defeated his remaining opponents (including the aged Marius), and was **appointed dictator** in 82 BCE.

Sulla took savage revenge on the Marians, packed the Senate with his supporters, and curtailed the powers of the tribunes. Anti-Sullan forces regrouped around **Quintus Sertorius**, who had fled to Spain. After Sulla died in 78 BCE, the Senate sent **Pompey** to deal with Sertorius. His military efforts were ineffective; only the assassination of Sertorius allowed Pompey to return victorious to Italy in 71 BCE.

In 73 BCE, a **slave revolt** led by the gladiator **Spartacus**, broke out near Naples and grew into the most serious revolt Rome had ever faced. Eventually, the rebel slaves were trapped in southern Italy and defeated by the Roman General **Marcus Licinius Crassus** in 71 BCE.

By the 1st century BCE, the Celtic peoples of southern Britain had started to expand their existing **hill-forts** into *oppida* ("towns") that were defended by extensive fortifications. The greatest *oppida* were formidable obstacles to attackers and some were royal capitals, complete with palaces.



The rebellion by Spartacus
Crassus crucified slaves along the Appian Way, which led to Rome, as a warning to any others who might plan a similar insurrection.

Sacred offering
This 1st-century BCE British Celtic shield was discovered in the River Thames, where it had probably been thrown as an offering to a river god.

100 BCE Political violence flares in Rome
c.100 BCE Rise of **Aksum** (northeast Africa)
99 BCE Serious uprising in **eastern China**
c.100 BCE Celtic **hill-forts** spread in northwest Europe
91 BCE **Social War** breaks out in **Rome** (to 89 BCE)
90 BCE **Ctesiphon** becomes capital of Parthia
88 BCE Roman consul **Sulla** conducts a **savage purge** of his pro-Marian opponents
88 BCE Mithridates II of **Parthia** killed by Scythian invaders
88 BCE Mithridates VI of **Pontus** attacks the Roman province of Asia
87 BCE **Sulla invades Greece** and besieges Athens
86 BCE **Marius's army** takes control of Rome
85 BCE Sulla defeats Mithridates VI at **Orchomenus**
84 BCE **Roman war** with Mithridates VI ends
83 BCE Second **Mithridatic War** (to 81 BCE)
82 BCE Sulla instigates new **purges in Rome**
80 BCE Early campaigns of **Julius Caesar** in Asia
c.80 BCE The **Sakas** conquer kingdom of Gandhara in Bactria
78 BCE **Pompey** suppresses revolt by the Roman consul Lepidus
76 BCE Pompey begins suppression of **Sertorian revolt**
74 BCE **Bithynia** (in Anatolia) becomes Roman province
73 BCE Spartacan **slave revolt** begins; ends with defeat by Crassus in 71 BCE
73 BCE Romans occupy Pontus and **Mithridates VI** flees to **Armenia**
72 BCE **Sertorius** murdered

70–61 BCE

Mound City, Ohio, USA, contains a cluster of more than 20 Hopewell earthwork burial mounds.

AFTER POMPEY'S RETURN TO ITALY (see 90–71 BCE), he was elected **consul** for the year, despite still being below the legal minimum age. When war broke out with **Mithridates of Pontus** again, the Romans, under general **Lucullus**, forced Mithridates to retreat to Armenia, which was ruled by his son-in-law Tigranes. However, Lucullus's **troops mutinied in 68 BCE**, and **Pompey** was sent to replace him. Tigranes surrendered and Mithridates retired north of the Black Sea. Having achieved his aim, Pompey entered Syria, where he deposed the last Seleucid king, and then **captured Jerusalem**.

In China, the **Han Dynasty** retreated from modernizing policies under **Zhaodi** (r.87–74 BCE) and **Xuandi** (r.74–49 BCE). The **Huo family**, which had dominated the government for decades was removed from power, and its leading members executed. Government expenditure was cut, and aggressive expeditions in Central Asia were replaced by the establishment of **small, permanent colonies.**

In **Mexico**, the city of **Cuiculco** in the south of the Valley of Mexico was destroyed by a **volcano** some time in the 1st century BCE. Its disappearance opened the way for **Teotihuacán**, to assert its control over the whole valley and become Mexico's dominant power for more than 500 years.

By the end of the 1st century BCE, the **Adena peoples** of Ohio, in eastern North America, were beginning to develop into the **Hopewell culture**. These people lived by hunting and gathering, but they also built large, elaborate burial mounds for their chieftains.

3

THE NUMBER OF **MILITARY TRIUMPHS** AWARDED TO **POMPEY**

Hopewell bird
Clay pipes, often in the shape of birds, are one of the most characteristic products of the Hopewell culture.

60–51 BCE

A reconstruction of the Roman ramparts at Alesia, where Caesar forced Vercingetorix to surrender.

GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR BECAME CONSUL OF ROME for the first time in 59 BCE. Having served a term as governor of Spain, he was popular among the equestrians (wealthy non-senators), but resistance to him from the Senate (and the obstructiveness of his co-consul Bibulus) led him to join with **Pompey** and **Crassus**, and the three dominated Rome until 53 BCE as the **"First Triumvirate"**.

In 58 BCE, Caesar was appointed governor of Narbonensis, the Roman-occupied area of southern Gaul. He took advantage of the migration of the Germanic **Helvetii** across Gaul towards Italy to cross over the Alps and defeat **Ariovistus**, the Helvetian king. Caesar returned to Rome, but his deputy, Labienus, stayed in Gaul and the following year he pressed on to conquer the **Belgae** of northwestern Gaul. By 55 BCE, Caesar had subdued most of Gaul and had acquired a vast new province for Rome, without ever receiving any approval from the Senate.

In 56 BCE, an **anti-Roman revolt** broke out among the **Veneti** of northern Gaul, apparently supported by the Celtic tribes of Britain. Caesar responded by crossing over to Britain in 55 BCE with two legions. A storm

Caesar at the Louvre
Wearing the laurel wreath of a victorious general, this statue is part of Caesar's cult of personality.

70 BCE **Parthia collapses** after attacks by Tigranes of Armenia

69 BCE Roman general **Lucullus** campaigns against Tigranes of Armenia; he **restores Syria** to the Seleucids

63 BCE Pompey captures **Jerusalem** and annexes **Judaea**

63 BCE **Cicero** elected consul

65 BCE **Pompey** defeats Mithridates of Pontus and Tigranes of Armenia

64 BCE Pompey deposes Antiochus XIII, the last Seleucid king and makes **Syria a Roman province**

61 BCE **Julius Caesar** receives first major **military command** as pro-praetor for Spain

59 BCE Caesar forms the **First Triumvirate** with Pompey and Crassus

58 BCE Beginning of Caesar's **Gallic Wars** of conquest (to 50 BCE)

56 BCE Revolt of the **Veneti** in Brittany against Roman rule

55 BCE Breakup of the **Xiongnu confederacy**; southern tribes become tributary to China

54 BCE Caesar's **second invasion** of Britain

59 BCE **Ptolemy XII**, an ally of Rome, is **expelled** from Egypt

57 BCE Caesar defeats the **Belgae** and **Nervii**

55 BCE **Restoration** of **Ptolemy XII** to Egyptian throne

55 BCE **Caesar invades Britain**, but withdraws

54 BCE Revolts in Gaul by the **Senones**, **Eburones**, and **Nervii** are put down

“ ...[CAESAR] DREAMT THAT HE WAS FLYING ABOVE THE CLOUDS, AND NOW THAT HE WAS CLASPING THE HAND OF JUPITER. ”

Suetonius, recounting Julius Caesar's dream the night before his murder in the Senate House in 44 BCE; from *Lives of the Caesars*

prevented the arrival of reinforcements, causing him to retreat, but he returned the next year with five legions (around 30,000 men). The Britons did not resist at first, but later, led by **Cassivelaunus**, chief of the Catuvellauni, they vigorously opposed the Romans all the way to the River Thames. When Cassivelaunus's stronghold at Wheathampstead fell, he sued for peace, and Caesar returned to Rome with hostages and the promise of tribute.

At the end of 54 BCE, shortly after Caesar's second expedition to Britain, another **revolt** in Gaul, this time led by the **Senones**, wiped out much of the Roman force there. After putting down the revolt, Caesar's attentions were diverted to Rome, where **political violence** had resulted in the murder of his former ally Clodius, and where Pompey had been elected sole consul in 52 BCE, rupturing the Triumvirate. Emboldened by the turmoil in Rome, the **Carnutes** revolted in Gaul. They were joined by the Averni, led by **Vercingetorix**, who won several skirmishes against Labienus. Vercingetorix also defeated Caesar himself at Gergovia, but was then trapped at **Alesia** in September 52 BCE. The Romans constructed an encircling rampart around the Gauls' position and managed to beat off a Gaulish relief force. With no hope left, **Vercingetorix surrendered** and was taken back to Rome, where he was strangled in 46 BCE after appearing in Caesar's triumphal parade.

KEY
- → Caesar's movements
- ✸ Siege
- ✕ Caesar's victories

Roman Civil Wars
Caesar won Italy easily, but he had to fight hard to overcome Pompey in his Greek stronghold, and then Pompey's sons and remaining supporters in Africa and Spain.

CAESAR ENDED THE GALLIC REVOLT by the end of 51 BCE, but by this point the **Triumvirate** had ended: Pompey's supporters had turned against Caesar, and Crassus had been killed in battle in 53 BCE. The Senate ordered Caesar to disband his army or be declared an enemy of the state. Instead, he **crossed the Rubicon River** into Italy with his troops in 49 BCE. This was illegal, constituting a **declaration of war** against the Senate.

As **Caesar marched towards Rome**, town after town submitted to him. Fearing Caesar, **Pompey** left Rome and **fled to Greece**. Caesar turned first to Spain, where seven legions had declared for Pompey. In August 49 BCE, he forced the Pompeians there to surrender. In December, Caesar set off for Greece in pursuit of Pompey. A military engagement at **Dyrrachium** in July went against Caesar, but he fought back before Pompey's support could grow, and won a resounding victory at **Pharsalus**. Pompey took refuge in Egypt, where he was murdered on the orders of **Ptolemy XIII**, who hoped (in vain) to ingratiate himself with Caesar.

After a short time in Egypt, **Caesar returned to Rome**, where he raised money by confiscating property from the supporters of Pompey. In late 47 BCE, Caesar set sail for Africa, where he defeated a new Pompeian army at **Thapsus** (in modern Tunisia). Pompey's sons Gnaeus and Sextus escaped to Spain to continue the resistance from there, and Caesar annexed the kingdom of King Juba of Mauretania, who had supported them. Caesar then proceeded to Spain, where in March 45 BCE he defeated Gnaeus Pompey at **Munda**, effectively ending the civil war.

Caesar was now all-powerful. He was made **dictator in 48 BCE**, and in 44 BCE he was given the office for life. Concerns over Caesar's power – in particular, fears that he planned to make himself king – led a group of about 60 conspirators to form around senators **Cassius** and **Marcus Brutus**. They **murdered Caesar** on the **Ides of March** (15 March) just before a session of the Senate. If they had hoped to seize power, the conspirators were disappointed: **Mark Antony**, one of Caesar's leading supporters, came to the fore in Rome, while Caesar's great-nephew and adoptive son **Octavian** received widespread support in a bid to take up the mantle of his father.

In India, **Kalinga** (modern Orissa), which had been a client kingdom of the Mauryas (see 200–171 BCE), rose to prominence under **Kharavela** in the mid-1st century BCE. Kharavela expanded Kalinga far to the north and east, conquering the Sunga capital of Pataliputra in Magadha. A strong patron of the Indian religion of Jainism, Kharavela established **trading contacts** as far afield as southeast Asia.

“ THE DIE IS CAST. ”

Julius Caesar to his troops on crossing the Rubicon in 49 BCE; from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*

Murder of Caesar
Conspirators struck Caesar down with daggers. As he fell, Caesar saw Marcus Brutus, a former protégé, and cried out "you too, child?".

52 BCE Vercingetorix leads new Gallic revolt, but is defeated

53 BCE Expedition of Crassus to Parthia ends in disaster, as his army is wiped out at Carrhae in Mesopotamia

c.50 BCE Teotihuacán in Mexico is the largest city in the Americas, with a population of 50,000

50 BCE Construction of a **new forum** in **Rome**

c.50 BCE Kharavela of Kalinga carves out an empire in India

49 BCE Caesar **crosses the Rubicon** into Italy

48 BCE Pompey flees to Egypt and is killed there

48 BCE Herod becomes **ruler of Galilee**, ending the power of the Hasmoneans

47 BCE Caesar defeats Pharnaces of Pontus (son of Mithridates) at **Zela**

46 BCE Roman colony of Carthage founded; remaining supporters of Pompey defeated at Thapsus

46 BCE Juba of Numidia commits suicide after defeat at Thapsus; his kingdom is annexed by Rome

46 BCE Julian reform of the calendar; the "Year of Confusion" has 445 days

46 BCE Caesar appointed **dictator**

45 BCE Caesar defeats Pompey's sons at **Battle of Munda**

44 BCE Murder of Caesar

44 BCE Cleopatra becomes ruler of Egypt

43–28 BCE

This 18th-century painting shows Mark Antony fleeing from the battle scene at Actium in 31 BCE. Many of his supporters defected to Octavian's side as a result.

IN ROME, THE PERIOD AFTER THE ASSASSINATION of **Julius Caesar** saw rising tensions between **Mark Antony** and **Octavian**, whom many viewed as Caesar's rightful heir. The two almost came to blows early in 43 BCE, when Octavian marched to raise the **siege of Mutina** (Modena, Italy), where Mark Antony was besieging Decimus Brutus, one of Caesar's assassins. Mark Antony was forced to retreat to Gaul. When the Senate voted to transfer Octavian's legions to Decimus Brutus, Octavian realized he was being sidelined and formed a three-way alliance with Mark Antony and **Marcus Lepidus**, the governor of Transalpine Gaul. This became the **Second Triumvirate**.

The Triumvirate conducted a war against **Cassius and Marcus Brutus**, two more of Caesar's assassins, who had seized much of the territory in the east.

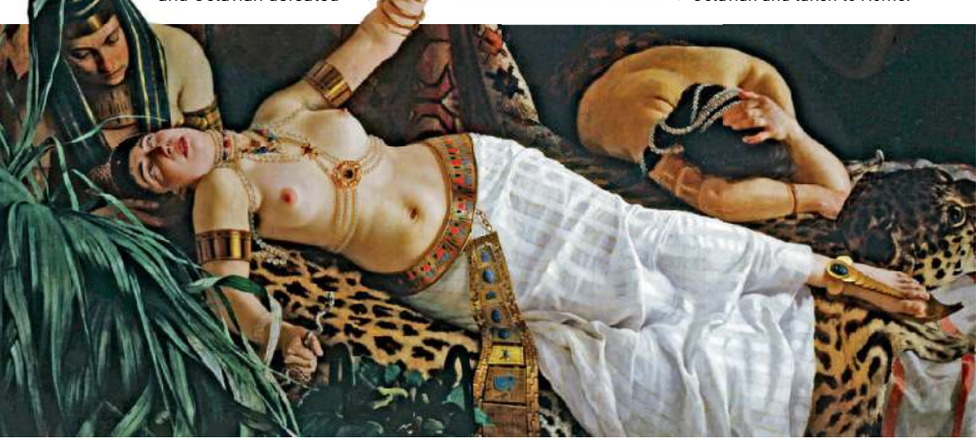
In 42 BCE, Mark Antony and Octavian defeated them at **Philippi**, in northern Greece, after which Cassius committed suicide. Three weeks later, they destroyed the remnants of Marcus Brutus's army. Mark Antony stayed in the east until 40 BCE, when he returned to Italy to try to undermine the **growing power of Octavian**. Their two armies refused to fight, and a de facto **division of the Roman world** was agreed, with Mark Antony ruling the east and Octavian governing the west; Lepidus had to make do with Africa. The **Triumvirate was renewed** in 38 BCE for a further five years, but it was clear that conflict between Octavian and Mark Antony could not long be postponed.

However, Mark Antony was occupied with a **war against the Parthians**, who allied with remnants of Cassius's army and **attacked Syria** in 39 BCE. In 36 BCE, Mark Antony **invaded Parthia** itself – ostensibly to recover the legionary eagles captured by the Parthians at the **Battle of Carrhae** (see 53 BCE) – and advanced to the capital Phraata, but he did not have sufficient resources to besiege it.

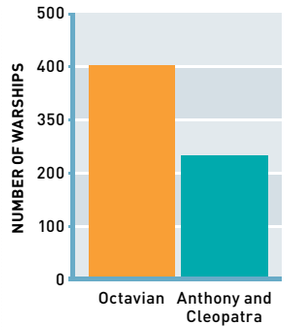
In 33 BCE, the **Triumvirate expired** and Octavian had the Senate declare Mark Antony a **public enemy**. The latter had lost popularity through his relationship with **Cleopatra**, the Egyptian queen, and Octavian quickly rallied public opinion to himself. A fleet was rapidly assembled, and this destroyed Mark Antony's naval force at **Actium**, off western Greece, in September 31 BCE. Mark Antony's land army then **defected** to Octavian, and Antony and Cleopatra **fled to Greece**, where Octavian caught up with them in the summer of 30 BCE. The Roman warlord and the Egyptian queen both **committed suicide**, and Egypt was annexed to the Roman empire. **Octavian** was now the **unchallenged master** of the whole Roman world.

10

THE NUMBER OF **YEARS** THE **SECOND TRIUMVIRATE** RULED **ROME**



Suicide of Cleopatra
This 19th-century painting depicts the death of Cleopatra, who killed herself to avoid being captured by Octavian and taken to Rome.



Battle of Actium
Octavian's fleet outnumbered that of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, with smaller more manoeuvrable ships, and fresher, better trained crews.

27–20 BCE

Augustus built a new Forum at Rome, with an imposing new temple to Mars.

HAVING DEFEATED HIS ENEMIES, **Octavian** did not take on the title of dictator, as Julius Caesar had. He instead ruled informally as the *princeps* – the **first man of the state**. Having acquired control of Antony's legions, he now had an army of about 500,000 men. He disbanded more than half of these, retaining 28 legions (about 150,000 soldiers), settling the remainder in colonies in Italy and abroad. In 27 BCE, Octavian gave up all his powers, ostensibly **restoring the Republic**. The Senate responded by granting him personal control of Egypt, Gaul, Germany, Spain, and Syria. He was also given the title "**Augustus**" and, cementing his position further, he was consul each year from 27 to 23 BCE. Over time, the Senate voted Augustus **further powers**, including that of *imperium maius* in 23 BCE, which gave him supreme authority in the provinces he had not previously governed, and the permanent powers of a **tribune of the plebs** in 23 BCE. Although the Senate was, in theory, the supreme authority in Rome, in practice no-one could match Augustus's power, and he is seen as the **first Roman emperor**.

North Africa had been a centre of strong resistance to both Julius Caesar and Augustus, who settled many army veterans there. In 25 BCE, Augustus gave Mauretania (western North Africa) to **Juba II of Numidia**. Juba, whose wife was the daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, proved a reliable **Roman ally**. Augustus still sent a legion to garrison North Africa, where it stayed for over 300 years.

43 BCE Octavian forms **Second Triumvirate** with Mark Antony and Lepidus

40 BCE **Herod I** becomes tetrarch of Galilee

42 BCE **Republican forces** defeated at **Philippi**; Brutus and Cassius commit suicide

40 BCE Roman territories divided between **Octavian** and **Antony**

40 BCE Parthian troops **capture Jerusalem**

39 BCE **Treaty of Misenum** between Antony, Octavian, and Sextus Pompeius, son of Pompey

39 BCE Antony defeats Parthians in **Cilicia**

37 BCE **Antony** marries **Cleopatra**, queen of Egypt

37 BCE Romans drive **Parthians out of Jerusalem** and restore Herod to throne

36 BCE Campaigns against **Sextus Pompeius**

36 BCE **Antony** is defeated by the Parthians and **retreats to Armenia**

34 BCE Antony invades **Armenia** and captures its ruler, Artavasdes

36 BCE Octavian forces **Lepidus out** of Triumvirate

31 BCE Octavian defeats Antony at **Battle of Actium**

32 BCE In China, **Chengdi** becomes Han emperor

30 BCE **Antony** and **Cleopatra** commit suicide; Egypt made Roman province

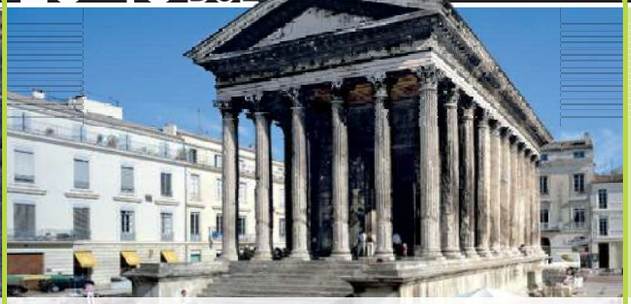
c.30 BCE Indo-Greek kingdoms of Bactria are overrun by the **Saka** tribesmen of Scythia

27 BCE Octavian takes the title **Augustus**, becoming in effect the **first Roman emperor**

27 BCE **Marcus Agrippa** completes Roman conquest of northern Spain

26–19 BCE Cantabrians of **northern Spain revolt** against Roman rule

25–24 BCE **Aelius Gallus** fails to conquer Arabia Felix (Yemen) for Rome



La Maison Carré, in Nîmes, southern France, is one of the finest surviving Roman temples. It was built around 16 BCE by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.

In western Asia, the ruler of Galilee, **Herod I**, was allowed to retain his position by **Octavian**, even though he had supported Mark Antony. He was even **given extra territories**, including parts of Syria and Gaza. Herod had been appointed by Mark Antony in 42 BCE, and by 37 BCE he had conquered the remains of the **Hasmonean kingdom** (see 146–131 BCE). Herod remained a reliable **ally of Rome** until his death in 4 BCE.

Emperor Augustus
Augustus, seen here dressed as a priest, acquired the title of pontifex maximus *(chief priest) on the death of Lepidus in 12 BCE.*

> “HE COULD **JUSTLY BOAST** THAT HE HAD FOUND IT **BUILT OF BRICK** AND LEFT IT **IN MARBLE.**”
>
> **Suetonius**, on Augustus's embellishment of the city of Rome; from *Lives of the Caesars*

AUGUSTUS'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUCCESSES had relied largely on the abilities of **Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa**, who rose from a minor family to become consul in 37, 28, and 27 BCE. After Agrippa had married Augustus's daughter Julia, he received numerous promotions, including tribune of the plebs in 18 BCE. Augustus's own appointed heir had died in 25 BCE, so he **adopted Agrippa's children**, renaming them **Gaius** and **Lucius Caesar**. Agrippa seemed likely to succeed Augustus, but in 12 BCE he died unexpectedly, throwing open the **question of succession**.

By threatening to **invade Parthia** in 20 BCE, Augustus had engineered the return of legionary standards captured by the Parthians at **Carrhae** (see 53 BCE). In 16 BCE, the Roman governor of Macedonia began pushing towards the River Danube, and from 12 BCE **Tiberius**, Augustus's stepson, the son of his second wife Livia, moved north from Illyria to create the Roman province of **Pannonia** (modern Austria and Hungary). Tiberius's brother **Drusus** pushed Roman control across the Rhine towards the Elbe between 12 and 9 BCE, when he died. Around this time, the Romans annexed the provinces of **Raetia** (in modern Switzerland) and **Noricum** (between the Alps and the Danube), **moving the empire's frontiers** almost to a line along the Rhine and the Danube.

Supporters of Tiberius, now the most **high-profile general**, tried to have him displace Lucius and Gaius Caesar as Augustus's heir. Augustus himself did little to resolve the question of succession.

ROMAN LITERATURE AT THE TIME OF AUGUSTUS

The end of the Republic and the reign of Augustus saw a golden age in Latin literature. The orator Cicero and the historian Sallust marked the height of late Republican literature. After Augustus's rise to power, the poets Virgil (right; 70–19 BCE), author of the *Eclogues* and the epic poem *The Aeneid*, and Horace (65–8 BCE), author of the *Odes* and *Carmen Saeculare*, both flourished under the patronage of Maecenas, a close confidant of Augustus.

> “THOSE **WHO SLEW MY FATHER I DROVE INTO EXILE...** AND... **DEFEATED THEM** IN BATTLE.”
>
> **Augustus**, from the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, the testament of Augustus, in Ankara, Turkey

BY 9 BCE, DRUSUS HAD DEFEATED THE MAIN GERMAN TRIBES and had reached the River Elbe. After his death, Augustus appointed **Tiberius** to replace him. Tiberius won a series of victories in 8 BCE, but then mysteriously **resigned his offices** and went into exile in Rhodes. This left Gaius and Lucius Caesar (both underage) as **heirs apparent** to the Roman Empire.

In China, the **reign of Yuandi** (49–33 BCE) saw the economic retrenchment begun under **Xuandi** (see 70–61 BCE) continue. Some semi-independent kingdoms that the early Han had suppressed began to reappear. Yuandi and his successors **Chengdi** (r.33–7 BCE) and **Aidi** (r.7–1 BCE) also created numerous **marquisates**, many of which were granted to the sons of the new kings, weakening the state's central control. Chengdi lacked a **male heir**, resulting in the succession of his half-nephew Aidi in 7 BCE. This caused **dissent** among nobles whose candidates for the throne had been overlooked.

Khazneh at Petra
The Khazneh is one of Petra's finest monuments. Carved out of a sheer cliff-face, it was probably a royal tomb – perhaps of Aretas IV (c.9 BCE–40 CE).

The **Nabataean kingdom** of northern Arabia grew rich on its control of the spice trade from southern Arabia, reaching its height in the mid-1st century BCE under **Malichos I** (c.59–c.30 BCE). It then faced a growing threat on its northern borders from **Herod I**. A disputed succession in 9/8 BCE between **Aretas IV** and his chief minister **Syllaeus** led the Romans to take an interest in the area. An expedition led by Gaius, grandson of Augustus, may even have briefly annexed Nabataea in 3–1 BCE, but the Romans pulled back, allowing Nabataea another century of independence.

25 BCE Doors to the **Temple of Janus** in Rome are **closed**, signifying peace throughout the Roman world

25 BCE **Juba II** made king of **Mauretania** by Augustus

c.25 BCE **Buddhist canon** written down for the first time in Sri Lanka

23 BCE Romans invade the **Meroitic kingdom** (modern Sudan)

20 BCE **Rome and Parthia** make **peace**; the Roman standards captured at the Battle of Carrhae are returned

19 BCE Herod I **rebuilds the temple** at Jerusalem

18 BCE **Agrippa**, close associate of Augustus, made **tribune** of the plebs

15 BCE Roman conquest of **Raetia** and **Noricum**

14 BCE Major **peasant uprising** in China

12 BCE **Death of Agrippa**, likely successor to Augustus, opens up question of who will succeed Augustus

12–9 BCE Roman **conquest of Germany** as far as the Elbe

10 BCE **Herod I** completes building of seaport at **Caesarea**

9 BCE Drusus completes Rome's campaign against German tribes; he dies, leaving his brother **Tiberius as leading contender** to succeed Augustus as emperor

9 BCE Roman campaigns against Maroboduus of the **Marcomanni** along the Danube

8 BCE **Tiberius** goes into **exile** in Rhodes

7 BCE In China, Emperor **Chengdi** is succeeded by **Aidi**, his half-nephew

4 BCE Probable birth date of **Jesus Christ**

4 BCE **Herod I dies**; his kingdom is divided between his three sons

2 BCE Augustus establishes the **praetorian guard** as imperial bodyguard

THE RISE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

FROM CITY, TO REPUBLIC, TO DOMINANT EUROPEAN EMPIRE

Soon after its foundation in 753 BCE, the city of Rome began fighting its neighbours to gain new territory. Gradually the Romans became entangled in campaigns in the Italian Peninsula and beyond. By the 1st century CE, the Roman Empire had become the largest Europe had ever seen.

The early growth of Roman territories was slow, with wars against neighbours often threatening the survival of Rome itself. By 290 BCE the Romans dominated central Italy, and began expanding into the Italian Peninsula. Rivalry with Carthage led to the three Punic Wars between 264 and 146 BCE, but victories brought the acquisition of territory in Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, and then North Africa itself.

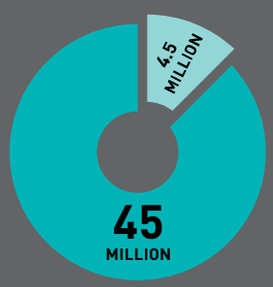
In the early 2nd century BCE the Romans fought campaigns in the Balkans, leading to the annexation of most of Greece in 146 BCE. The pace of acquisition quickened in the later years of the Republic, as generals competed for political power and used their military successes to bolster their position in Rome. It was in this period that Pompey annexed Syria and Julius Caesar conquered much of Gaul, between 58 and 51 BCE.

The collapse of the Roman Republic and the accession of the first emperor, Augustus, in 27 BCE did not end the empire's expansion. The quest for security along the existing frontiers resulted in the frontiers being pushed even further forward. Rome's final large-scale acquisitions were made in the reigns of Claudius, who oversaw the invasion of Britain in 43 CE, and Trajan, who conquered new provinces in Dacia (modern Romania) and Mesopotamia between 106 and 117 CE.

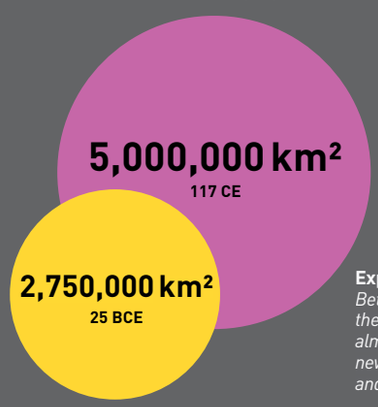
> “TO THE **ROMANS** I SET **NO BOUNDARIES** IN TIME OR SPACE.”

Virgil, Roman poet (70–19 BCE), the god Jupiter, prophesying the future greatness of Rome, from the *Aeneid*

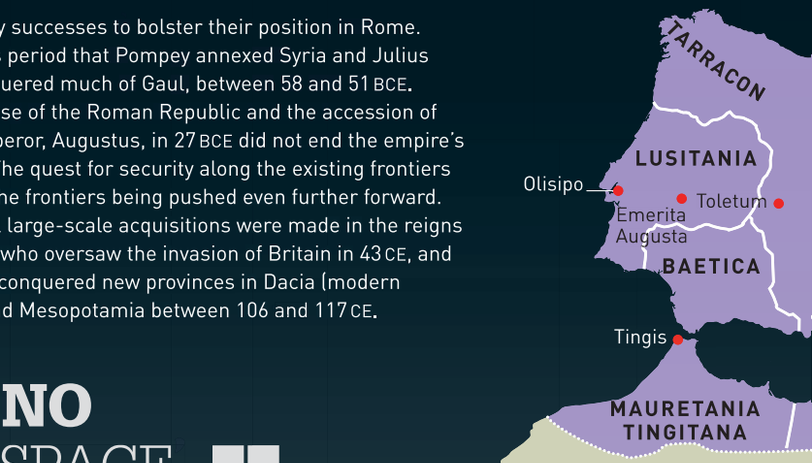
7:1 **Roman population**
Around 1 CE, the Roman Empire contained just under one seventh of the world's population – 45 million out of 300 million people.



An empire of non-citizens
In 1 CE, only a tenth of the Roman population were full citizens. The rest were slaves or had limited civic rights.



Expanding empire
Between the accession of Augustus and the death of Trajan, the Roman Empire almost doubled in size, acquiring vast new territories in northwestern Europe and western Asia.



KEY
Roman territory

100 CE
By around 100 CE, the Mediterranean had become a Roman "lake", and the acquisition of territories in northwest and Central Europe had brought the northern Roman frontier as far as the Rhine and the Danube.

A GROWING EMPIRE

It took the Romans nearly 500 years to complete the conquest of Italy, but only half that time to enlarge their territories to include Spain, Gaul, parts of Germany, most of the Balkans, much of North Africa, and large parts of western Asia. Over the following 100 years they acquired Morocco, Britain, and Dacia, and made small advances into western Asia, but the empire began to contract after 250 CE.

240 BCE The Romans dominated most of the Italian Peninsula. Victory in the First Punic War (264–241 BCE) brought new territory in Sicily, but the Romans still faced resistance to their rule in northern Italy.

10,000 KILOMETRES

THE APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF THE **ROMAN FRONTIERS** AT THEIR **MAXIMUM EXTENT**

North Sea
Baltic Sea
Caledonia
Germania
Burgundians
Sarmatians
Marcomanni
Quadi
Black Sea
Red Sea
Sahara
Mediterranean Sea

BRITANNIA: Eburacum, Lindum, Camulodunum, Londinium
GERMANIA INFERIOR: Colonia Agrippina, Augusta Treverorum, Mogontiacum
BELGICA: Durocortorum
LUGDUNENSIS: Lugdunum
AQUITANIA
GERMANIA SUPERIOR
RAETIA: Vindobona, Carnuntum, Brigetio
NORICUM: Virunum, Aquileia, Aquineum
PANNONIA SUPERIOR
PANNONIA INFERIOR: Apulum
MOSIA INFERIOR: Roxolani, Durostorum
BOSPORAN KINGDOM
DACIA: Sirmium, Viminacium
MODESIA SUPERIOR
DALMATIA
ALPS GRAIAE ET POENINAE
ALPS COTTIAE: Mediolanum, Ravenna
NARBONENSIS: Massilia
ALPS MARITIMAE
ENSIS
Corsica: Aleria
Sardinia: Carales
Baleares: Valentia, Carthago Nova
ITALIA: Rome, Messana
Sicilia: Syracuse
MAURETANIA CAESARIENSIS: Utica, Carthage, Thugga
AFRICA: Sabratha, Leptis Magna
CYRENE ET CRETA: Ptolemais, Cyrene, Creta
AEGYPTUS: Alexandria, Memphis
THRACIA: Philippopolis, Byzantium
BITHYNIA ET PONTUS: Ancyra, Trapezus
CAPPADOCIA: Samosata
ASIA: Ephesus, Miletus
GALATIA
LYCIA
CILICIA: Zeugma, Antioch
SYRIA: Damascus
JUDEA: Jerusalem, Tyrus, Bostra
ARABIA: Petra
Cyprus
MACEDONIA: Thessalonica
EPIRUS: Delphi
ACHAIA: Corinth, Sparta, Athens

200 BCE The Roman defeat of Carthage in the Second Punic War brought new possessions in Spain and Sardinia. By 200 BCE, a toehold had also been gained in northwestern Greece.

120 BCE Most of Spain had fallen into Roman possession, as well as Carthaginian territory in North Africa. Greece and parts of western Anatolia were also acquired.

60 BCE New North African territories were gained in 96 BCE, and in 63 BCE Syria and parts of Palestine were annexed. The frontiers in Anatolia were also pushed forward.

14 CE The Roman borders had expanded to include Gaul beyond the Alps, as well as new provinces in Raetia and Noricum (Switzerland, south Germany, and Austria), and Pannonia (Hungary).

“QUINCTILIUS VARUS, GIVE ME **BACK** MY **LEGIONS.**”

Emperor Augustus, on hearing of the Roman defeat in the Teutoberg Forest, 9 CE

Consolidating ruler
Rather than extending Roman territory through foreign conquests, Tiberius concentrated on strengthening the existing empire.

WANG MANG WAS IN CHARGE OF BOTH THE CHINESE ARMY and the government under **Emperor Ping Di** (r.1 BCE–6 CE). He strengthened his influence by marrying his daughter to the young emperor. On Ping Di's death, many of the nobility rejected Wang Mang's choice of successor and rose up in **revolt**. Wang Mang easily put them down, and in 9 he took the title of **first Xin emperor**. He reissued the currency, forbade the selling of private slaves, reorganized the commanderies (China's administrative regions), and reimposed several state monopolies. Serious floods on the Yellow River in 4–11 led to **famine and revolts** in rural areas. In 23, the peasant rebels called the "**Red Eyebrows**" joined forces with Han loyalists and overwhelmed Wang Mang's armies. When the capital Chang'an fell, **Gengshi** became the first emperor of the **restored Han dynasty**. One of his first acts was to make Luoyang his capital.

28
THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT **TYPES** OF **COIN** ISSUED BY **WANG MANG**

In Europe, **Tiberius** (see 20–2 BCE) returned to Germany in 4 to subdue the tribes there. The **Marcomanni resisted**, but a planned attack on them in 6 was postponed because of a revolt in Pannonia, which took three years to quell. A new Roman commander, **Quinctilius Varus**, was sent to Germany, but his **corrupt rule** angered the German tribes. In 9, Varus was ambushed in the **Teutoberg Forest**, and his three legions were annihilated. Augustus then ordered a **withdrawal to the Rhine**, where the Roman frontier remained for the next 400 years.

When Emperor Augustus (see 20–2 BCE) died in 14, **Tiberius** was his obvious heir (Lucius and Gaius Caesar having died). Tiberius already possessed most of Augustus's powers and had the **loyalty of the Praetorian Guard** – the elite army unit based in Rome, which Augustus had established. Although there were moves in the senate to **restore the Republic**, Tiberius rapidly squashed them. His reign (to 37) was quiet at home. **Germanicus**, Tiberius's nephew, campaigned extensively in Germany up to 16, but his efforts led to no permanent reacquisition of territory beyond the Rhine and he died of poisoning in 19. After Drusus, Tiberius's son, died in 23, the **emperor tired of public life** and retired to the island of Capri, off Naples. **Sejanus**, head of the Praetorian Guard, took day-to-day power, but his rule was tyrannical and in 31 Tiberius suddenly reasserted himself and had Sejanus executed.

Ponte di Tiberio, Rimini, Italy
Completed in the reign of Tiberius, this bridge carried the Via Aemilia (which ran from Riminia to Piacenza) across the River Marecchia.

GENGSHI'S REIGN AS CHINESE EMPEROR WAS SHORT. He alienated the Red Eyebrows and angered many of China's nobility and bureaucrats by moving the capital from Luoyang back to **Chang'an**. Much of China had already slipped from Gengshi's grasp by 25, when Chang'an was sacked by the Red Eyebrows. The emperor was deposed and replaced by **Guang Wudi** (25–57), who is regarded as the first **Eastern Han** emperor. The new ruler had first to face a **civil war**; by 27, he had defeated the Red Eyebrows, but it took him until 36 to overcome the last of the **warlords** who opposed him. In 37, he abolished all except three of the kingdoms that had sprung up

KEY
- Qin China in 206 BCE
- Territory added by Former Han Dynasty 206 BCE–9 CE
- Great Wall under the Han

Chinese Han Empire
When Guang Wudi began the Eastern Han Dynasty in 25, Chinese control extended deep into Central Asia. Much of this territory had been won under the Western Han Dynasty.

1 **Kushan** invasion of northwest India
c.1 Rise of the Hindu state of **Funan**
c.1 Appearance of **hieroglyphic** writing in Mayan areas of **Mexico**
2 First **census** in **China**
6 Revolt in **Pannonia** and **Dalmatia** takes Tiberius three years to suppress
9 Pannonia organized as **Roman province**
9 Three Roman legions destroyed by Germanic tribes in **Teutoberg Forest**
12 **Artabanus II** defeats the Scythian Pahlavas and becomes **king of Parthia**
17 **Germanicus**, adopted son of Tiberius, defeats Germans
17 Tacfarinas leads **Numidian revolt** against Roman rule in North Africa
21 Revolt of the **Aedui** and **Treveri** in Gaul quickly put down
26 Tiberius retires to Capri, leaving Sejanus, the prefect of the **Praetorian Guard**, in charge in Rome

c.1 **Buddhism** **spreads** to coastal areas of southeast Asian mainland
c.1 **Moche culture** flourishes in northern Peru
6 Roman procurator appointed to govern **Judaea**
9 King Nakatamani of **Meroe** (in present-day Sudan) starts large-scale **building programme**
9 Wang Mang seizes Chinese throne and establishes **Xin dynasty**
14 Death of Augustus; he is succeeded by his adopted son **Tiberius**
17 **Cappadocia** **annexed** to Rome
17 Roman poet **Ovid** dies in exile (b.43 BCE)
23 Collapse of China's Xin dynasty; **Han dynasty** **restored**, with its capital at Louyang
26 **Pontius Pilate** becomes procurator of Judaea
c.33 Crucifixion of **Jesus Christ**

This ornamental brick from China's Eastern Han period shows a procession that includes horse-drawn carriages.

JESUS CHRIST (*c.*4 BCE–33 CE)

Jesus, a carpenter from Nazareth, began his ministry in his early 30s. He taught in the Jewish tradition, calling for the reform of the Temple and for the love of one's neighbour to take precedence over the strict observance of religious law. Jesus gathered a group of twelve disciples around him, but was targeted by Jewish conservatives afraid of his growing influence. In 33, the Roman authorities in Judaea executed Jesus by crucifixion, but the disciples, convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead, continued his teaching.

under his predecessors, and reinstated Luoyang as the capital. He faced renewed tension with the **Hsiung-nu** on China's northern frontier, but failed to take advantage of their split into two **rival chiefdoms** in 49.

The **Roman Empire** once again faced an **unclear succession** at the death of Tiberius in 37. He had named two heirs, but Gemellus was soon pushed aside because Gaius, nicknamed **Caligula** ("little boots"), was popular with the senate and the army. Caligula's behaviour as emperor became increasingly erratic – he had Gemellus executed, and had many of Tiberius's supporters killed. He also had his sister's husband – his heir apparent – condemned to death. After visiting the Rhineland legions in 39, Caligula marched them to the coast opposite Britain to launch an invasion; when they got there, he merely had them collect seashells along the beach.

Independent **Jewish kingdoms** in Palestine **collapsed** as Roman power grew, creating a powerful ferment of religious change. **John the Baptist** preached in the 20s, followed in around 30 by a new preacher, **Jesus**. After Jesus's death in 33, his disciples began to spread his message more widely. By around 50, communities of Christians, as Jesus's followers were known, would be established throughout Western Asia, with particularly large groups in Antioch and the first appearance of **Christians in Rome**.

IN INDIA, GROUPS OF YUEZHI NOMADS occupying land in Bactria united under Kujula Kadphises (30–80), who founded the **Kushan Empire** and conquered parts of Gandhara. Although few details of Kujula's reign are known, he **minted coins** in imitation of both Greek and Roman models, demonstrating that Bactria and northwestern India remained very much a **cultural crossroads**.

In northwestern Europe, a group of disgruntled officers of Rome's Praetorian Guard **assassinated Caligula** in January 41, tired of his cruel and irrational behaviour (see 24–40). In 43, the new emperor, **Claudius** (r.41–54), sent an invasion force of four legions led by **Aulus Plautius**, governor of Pannonia, to **conquer Britain**. The Romans landed unopposed at Richborough, pushed on to London, and then captured Colchester, the capital of the principal British resistance leader, **Caractacus**. Claudius himself made a brief appearance at the fall of Colchester, before returning to Rome to bask in the glory of having **acquired a new province**. In 47, the Romans paused briefly in their conquest of Britain, having reached a line roughly between the River Humber in the east and the River Severn in the west. They began **establishing legionary fortresses** in their new province, including at Exeter and Lincoln. Aulus Plautius's replacement, **Ostorius Scapula** invaded Wales, where Caractacus was continuing the resistance. In 50, he defeated an army of Silurian and Ordovician tribesmen, and Caractacus fled to the imagined safety of the Brigantes tribe in northern England. However, the Brigantian queen, **Cartimandua**, handed Caractacus over to the Romans, and Roman Britain remained relatively trouble free during the following decade.

Christian catacomb, Rome
At first, Roman Christians did not have their own cemeteries. Later, they buried their dead in underground complexes called catacombs.

The 40s saw a struggle in the early **Christian community** between those who wanted to remain within the Jewish tradition and those, led by **Paul**, who favoured the inclusion of gentiles (non-Jews) in the Christian church. Paul began a series of **missionary journeys** in 46 which led him through Anatolia and Greece to Rome, where he was **martyred** around 62. A charismatic preacher, Paul also wrote a powerful series of **epistles** (letters) to various fledgling Christian groups. In appealing to a wider group than the Jews within the Roman empire, Paul ensured that **Christianity spread** sufficiently to help it weather the storms of **persecution** that began under the Emperor Nero in 64. By the late 4th century, Christianity would be the **majority religion** within the Roman Empire.

EMPEROR CLAUDIUS (10 BCE–54 CE)

Caligula's uncle, Claudius, was an unlikely candidate for Roman emperor. However, he turned out to be intelligent and forceful, putting down two revolts in 42, after which he executed more than 300 senators. He was unfortunate in his choice of wives: he had his wife Messalina executed after she had an affair, and her successor Agrippina (Caligula's sister) is reputed to have poisoned him.

35 **Artabanus III** of Persia **overthrown** by his cousin, with support of Rome

36 Artabanus III restored as king of **Parthia**

37 Tiberius dies and is succeeded by his great nephew **Caligula**

39 Caligula deposes Herod Antipas as Tetrarch of Galilee and appoints **Herod Agrippa** in his place

40 King Ptolemy of Mauretania assassinated; the **Mauretanians revolt** against Roman rule

c.40 South American **Arawak** peoples migrate down Orinoco River and settle in Caribbean

41 **Violence in Alexandria** between Greek and Jewish inhabitants

41 Caligula assassinated and succeeded by his uncle, **Claudius**

42 Romans crush Mauretanian revolt; **Mauretania** becomes a Roman province

43 Revolt of the Trung sisters in **Vietnam** against Chinese rule is crushed

43 Roman **invasion of Britain** under Aulus Plautius; by 47, most of south and east are subjugated

44 **Judaea annexed** to Roman Empire

46 Romans **annex** kingdom of **Thrace**

47 Saint Paul's **missionary journeys** begin (to 57)

47 Ostorius Scapula, Roman commander in **Britain**, advances north as far as Humber–Severn line

48 Eastern Han emperor **Huang Wudi** restores Chinese rule in inner **Mongolia**

70 THOUSAND

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE **KILLED** BY **BOUDICCA'S ARMY** DURING THE **ICENI REVOLT**

WHEN CLAUDIUS DIED IN 54, the Roman imperial throne fell to **Nero** (37–68), his adopted son and son-in-law. The young emperor's reign began well when he promised the senate he would avoid making any arbitrary measures. However, the first sign of Nero's tyranny surfaced in 59, when he had his mother **Agrippina** (15–59) murdered. In 62, a new praetorian prefect (commander of the imperial bodyguard), **Tigellinus** (*c.*10–69), took office. Tigellinus pandered to the less desirable side of Nero's personality, whose rule became increasingly despotic. Following a **fire** that destroyed much of Rome in 64, Nero is said to have taken terrible retribution on Rome's small Christian population, who proved convenient scapegoats. Later, during the reconstruction of Rome, Nero alienated senators by seizing their land to build himself a new palace. He also ordered additional taxes in Palestine, which sparked a **Jewish revolt** in 66.

In **Britain**, the Romans faced a serious **Iceni** revolt in 60. When the king of the Iceni died, he left his lands to his queen, **Boudicca**. The revolt was triggered when the Roman procurator (chief financial official) ruled that Boudicca could not inherit her lands, and that they would be annexed by Rome. Boudicca raised an army and marched on Camulodunum (Colchester). **Suetonius Paullinus**, the governor of Britain, was away on campaign in Wales, and by the time he returned, Camulodunum had been sacked by the Iceni. The rebels then burnt Londinium (London) and Verulamium (St Albans) before they were finally trapped and defeated by Paullinus. It is said the Iceni lost 80,000 warriors and Boudicca herself was captured, though she died, possibly poisoned, soon after.

Boudicca
This statue of Boudicca stands outside the Houses of Parliament in London, a city that the Iceni queen razed to the ground.

The ruins at Masada, the last outpost of the Jewish revolt against the Romans, which began in 66.

IN THE EAST, Rome faced further troubles with **Parthia** over the border region of **Armenia**, where the Parthian king had installed his own candidate, **Tiridates**, as king in 53. A Roman force invaded Armenia in 59, took its capital cities of Artaxata and Tigranocerta and put in place a pro-Roman king, **Tigranes VI.** His ill-advised invasion of a Parthian ally in 61 led to his removal, and Tiridates was restored. A new Roman army was then roundly beaten by the Parthians in 62, and only a Roman push into Armenia the following year ended the war. Tiridates was allowed to keep the throne, as long as he travelled to Rome to seek Nero's approval, which he eventually did in 66.

Nero's position as emperor became increasingly precarious when **Calpurnius Piso** led a conspiracy in 64, which prompted Nero to order further executions, including those of many senators. In early 68, a revolt broke out, led by **Gaius Julius Vindex**, governor of Gallia Lugdunensis. Shortly after the revolt of Vindex, the legion based in Spain proclaimed the governor, **Sulpicius Galba**, as emperor. Vindex's revolt was put down by **Verginius Rufus**, the governor of Germany, but **Nero** panicked and **committed suicide**, believing Rufus would be the next to try to claim his throne.

After Nero's suicide, four men became emperor in rapid succession, making 69 the **"Year of the Four Emperors"**. First, the praetorian guard recognized **Galba** (3 BCE–69 CE) as emperor, but he made himself unpopular by refusing to give the praetorians the donative, a customary bonus payable on the accession of a new emperor. In January 69, the governor of Upper Germany, **Aulus Vitellius**, revolted, and one of Galba's former supporters, **Salvius Otho** (32–69), angered when Galba recognized another senator as his heir, had the emperor murdered and took the throne. In April 69, the armies of Otho and Vitellius clashed at Bedriacum near Cremona in northern Italy, and the Vitellian army won. Otho committed suicide, but Vitellius soon faced a further conspiracy when T. Flavius Vespasianus

Roman invasion
When the Romans finally breached the walls of Masada, all except seven defenders committed suicide rather than fall into Roman hands.

51 Romans capture **Caractacus**, leader of the British resistance

52 Saint Paul begins spreading Christianity in Greece

53 Vologases of Parthia puts his brother **Tiridates** on the throne of Armenia, fuelling tensions with Rome

54 Roman emperor **Claudius** is murdered and succeeded by his stepson **Nero**

57 An ambassador from Japan arrives at the **Han capital** of Luoyang

58 Armenia becomes a Roman protectorate

59 Suetonius Paulinus becomes governor of Britain

60 Nero sends an expedition to explore **Meroe** on the east bank of the Nile

c.60 Mark begins writing the first of the **gospels** recounting the life of Jesus Christ

c.60 Kushans under Kujula Kadphises advance into northern India, starting the **Kushan Empire**

60 The **Iceni revolt against the Romans** in Britain

63 Peace of Rhandeia between Rome and Parthia; **Tiridates** is returned to the Armenian throne

64 Great **Fire of Rome**; Nero blames the Christians and many are martyred

66–70 Jewish revolt against Roman rule

c.65 Buddhism reaches China

A fresco from Pompei – many of Pompei's elaborate frescoes survived for nearly 2,000 years buried under the ash.

Jewish revolts between 66 and 74
Although the Jewish rebels of 66 initially managed to gain control of a large part of Palestine, by 69 they had lost control of all but the area around Jerusalem.

KEY
- Area of major revolt 66
- Area of revolt in 69
- Siege
- Jewish victory

(Vespasian) (9–79) – the general in charge of suppressing the Jewish revolt – set himself up as yet another rival emperor. The whole of the East and the Balkans defected immediately to Vespasian. At a second **battle near Cremona** in October, Vitellius's forces were crushed. By December Vespasian's army had taken Rome and Vitellius was executed shortly afterwards. Rome had an **unchallenged ruler** once again.

Vespasian moved quickly to re-establish the loyalty of the army, dismissing Vitellius's praetorian guard and recruiting another. He also had to face a serious revolt along the Rhine, where **Julius Civilis**, a noble of the Batavian people, joined forces with dissident legionaries and almost established an independent **Gallic empire**.

Judaea had been under direct Roman rule since the death of King Agrippa I in 44. Foreign rule and Roman insensitivity towards Jewish laws caused great discontent. In 60, the rebuilding of the Temple that Herod had ordered built decades before was finished, and 20,000 unemployed workmen added to the rising tension. The Roman procurator of Judaea aggravated these feelings with his **heavy-handed rule**, and in 66 an uprising broke out. Although the commanders of the uprising were competent, it lacked political leadership and the Jewish strongholds were gradually reduced, first by Vespasian and then by his son Titus (39–81). In 70, **Jerusalem** came under siege, and in late August the city fell and the Temple was destroyed. Perhaps as many as 200,000 people died, many sacred Jewish treasures were taken to Rome, and thousands of Jews were enslaved. Resistance continued at **Masada** until 74, when it fell after a two-year siege.

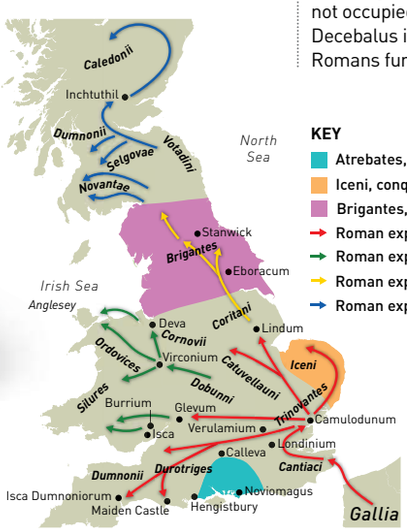
BY THE MID-70S, CIVILIS'S REVOLT had fizzled out and the rest of Vespasian's reign was largely peaceful. With a reputation for frugality, he restored the empire's finances, imposing levies on a number of provinces, including Egypt. By the time he died in 79, **stability had been restored** to such an extent that the succession of his eldest son, **Titus** (r.79–81), was unopposed.

Two months after the accession of Titus as Roman emperor, on 25 August 79 the city of **Pompeii**, near modern Naples, was destroyed by a volcanic eruption. Showers of ash came raining down from **Vesuvius**, and those who did not escape in time were overwhelmed by the pyroclastic flow (a fast-moving mass of hot gases, ash, and debris) from the volcano. Perhaps a tenth of the population of 20,000 died, including the naturalist Pliny the Elder, who was commanding a naval unit nearby and perished in a failed rescue attempt.

Figure from Pompeii
The bodies of those who died in the Pompeii eruption were coated in volcanic ash, which then solidified, leaving their outlines behind.

In **Britain**, the Roman-controlled area continued to expand, with governor Petillius Cerialis (71–74) occupying the northern English kingdom of **Brigantia**. Julius Frontinus (74–77) completed the subjugation of Wales, defeating the Silures, but it was left to Julius Agricola (77–83/4) to send Roman armies far into Scotland, until a final defeat of the Caledonii at **Mons Graupius** (possibly near Aberdeen) made it likely the whole of Scotland would be annexed. But emperor **Domitian** (81–96) was facing trouble on the Danube and a legion was withdrawn from Britain around 86, leaving an insufficient force to garrison northern Scotland, which was evacuated.

Domitian had managed to fend off the threat from the **Sarmatians, Marcomanni, and Quadi** along the **Danube** by 84, but war then erupted with the **Dacians** (of modern Romania) who crossed the Danube and killed the governor of Roman Moesia. By 86, Domitian had defeated the Dacians, under their new king, **Decebalus**. Dacia was not occupied by Rome, leaving Decebalus in place to cause the Romans further trouble.



KEY
- Atrebates, absorbed 70s
- Iceni, conquered 60–61
- Brigantes, conquered 69–74
- Roman expansion 43–47
- Roman expansion 47–50
- Roman expansion 69–74
- Roman expansion 79–84

Romans in Britain
By 74, Roman legions had reached the north of England. They then pushed north into Scotland until 83.

67 Vespasian, commander of the Danubian legions, begins suppression of Jewish revolt, **retaking Galilee**

68 Emperor **Nero** commits suicide

69 Year of the **Four Emperors**; **Vespasian** becomes emperor

69 Romans defeat the **Garmantians** in North Africa

70 The **Jewish revolt is ended**

73 Han control new stretches of western oasis areas in Central Asia

74 Roman **capture of Masada** in Palestine

77 Julius Agricola becomes governor of Britain

78 Kushan ruler **Vima Kadphises** sends envoys to Rome to arrange an attack on the Parthians

79 Eruption of **Vesuvius** destroys **Pompeii** and Herculaneum

80 Flavian amphitheatre (the Colosseum) **completed** in Rome

c.80 Luke begins to write his **gospel**

83 Battle of **Mons Graupius**; Roman commander Agricola defeats the Caledonii

87 War breaks out between the **Romans** and **Decebalus**, king of the Dacians

87 Embassy from the **Kushans** arrives in **Luoyang**

88 The Han abolish the state **monopolies** on iron and salt

c.90 The **Shakas** invade northwest India

91–100

101–117

> “[AN EMPEROR] UNDER WHOM **EVERYBODY** WAS **PERMITTED** TO DO **EVERYTHING.**”

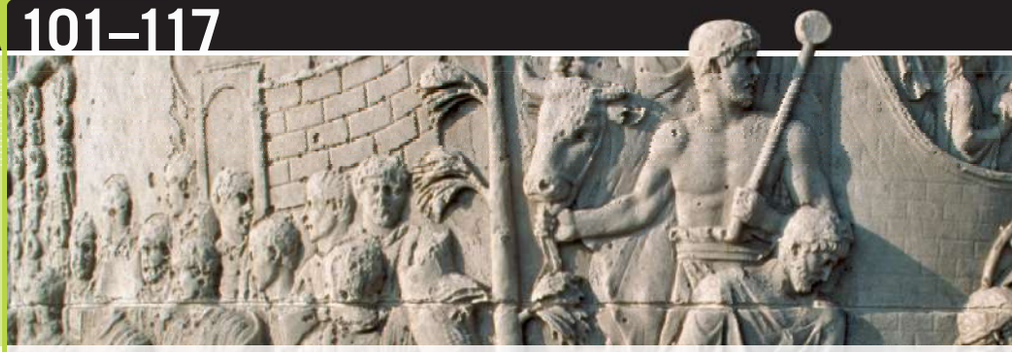
Fronto, Roman orator, on Emperor Nerva, from Cassius Dio's *History of Rome*

Emperor Domitian
Domitian's reign began well, but his descent into tyranny proved too much for his opponents, who had him assassinated.

DOMITIAN (51–96) BECAME ROMAN EMPEROR after the unexpected death of his brother, Titus (39–81). Domitian had never commanded armies and was unprepared for the exercise of supreme power. He had some success in his early campaigns, but he over-extended himself against the Dacians, and in putting down a legionary revolt led by **Saturninus**, the governor of Germania Superior. This distraction allowed **Decebalus, King of the Dacians** (r.87–106), to renew his war against Rome, and Domitian was forced to pay off the Dacians with an annual subsidy.

The conspiracy of Saturninus led Domitian to become paranoid and he had many senators executed for treason. In September 96, he was murdered in a palace conspiracy and the Senate chose the aged **M. Cocceius Nerva** (30–98) to replace him. The Senate then voted to destroy all statues of Domitian and to recall those he had exiled. However, in 97 Nerva faced a mutiny of the praetorian guard, who demanded the punishment of Domitian's murderers. Nerva was forced to give in, weakening his authority. His position was further diminished by his lack of an heir. To rectify this he adopted M. Ulpius Traianus **(Trajan)**, the governor of Upper Germany, a man with a strong military backing. Nerva died soon afterwards and Trajan became emperor.

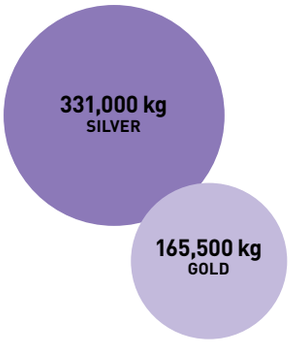
In Central Asia, the northern Hsiung-nu confederation (see 146–131 BCE) collapsed in 89, allowing the Han to make large gains in the region, led by **general Ban Chao** (32–102). Ban Chao became protector-general of the Western Regions in 92, and re-established control over the key oases along the **Silk Route.** By the time he retired in 102 the Han controlled most of the Tarim Basin. **Chinese state organization** became very complicated under the Han. Three supreme officials supervised large, complex departments. Each of these was subdivided into nine ministries. Governors oversaw each region, with regions divided into over 1,000 counties, each supervised by a magistrate. Eunuchs became increasingly influential at the Han court.



Trajan's Column, in Rome, gives a visual account of Trajan's campaigns against Decebalus in the Dacian Wars.

EMPEROR TRAJAN (98–117) WAS FROM A ROMAN FAMILY who had settled in Spain – he was the first emperor to come from a Roman province rather than Italy. Having returned to Rome from Germany in 100 to claim his throne, he started a new **Dacian War** against Decebalus in 101. From a base at Viminacium (in modern Serbia), he pushed into central Dacia, and fought a major engagement at Tapae, in which both sides suffered serious losses. When Trajan's legions neared the Dacian royal capital at **Sarmizegetusa Regia**, Decebalus sued for peace, agreeing to give up his army's weapons and siege equipment, and to demolish his remaining forts. The Roman army did not withdraw totally, establishing a legionary base near the mountains and building a bridge across the Danube at Drobeta to allow easier access across the river. Three years later, in 105, the Senate declared that Decebalus had violated the treaty, and Trajan embarked on his **Second Dacian War**. This time the legions reached, and took, Sarmizegetusa in 106. Decebalus fled and then committed suicide to avoid capture. The Romans acquired an enormous amount of treasure in Dacia, which allowed Trajan to embark on a building spree, including the construction of a **new Forum** in Rome. Dacia was annexed as Rome's first province across the Danube. It remained in imperial hands for over 160 years.

Some time around 106 the Roman governor of Syria annexed the **Nabataean kingdom**, which became the Roman province of Arabia. It was not Trajan's last acquisition in the east – in 113 he set off on a campaign against **Parthia**. He began by attacking Armenia in 113–114, but it was his campaign against Parthia itself that gave him greater success in the east than any previous Roman emperor. By late 114 the Armenians had submitted to him, and he pushed into Mesopotamia, capturing the Parthian capital of **Ctesiphon**. By the end of 115, Trajan had reached the Persian



The Dacian Fortune
The large amount of treasure Trajan acquired in Dacia allowed him to build impressive monuments to commemorate his Dacian victory.

Sacred city
This ruined temple is in the Dacian capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia (in modern-day Romania). It contained the kingdom's most sacred shrines.

91 **Han** defeat the Hsiung-nu in China
92 **Domitian** campaigns along the Danube
96 **Assassination** of Domitian
97 Praetorian guard **revolts against Nerva**
98 **Trajan** becomes emperor
99 **Indian embassy** arrives in Rome
c.100 Kushan emperor **Kanishka** encourages spread of **Buddhism** in central Asia
c.100 Pyramids of the Sun and Moon constructed at **Teotihuacán** in Mexico
c.100 **Alexandria** emerges as Christian centre
101 Trajan invades **Dacia** (to 102)
105 Trajan's **Second Dacian War**
c.105 **Paper** invented in China
106 The Nabataean kingdom is annexed by Rome and becomes **province of Arabia**
106 Following defeat of Decebalus, his kingdom is annexed as the Roman province of **Dacia**
109 **Pliny the Younger** appointed governor of Bithynia
113 Trajan completes building of a **new Forum** at Rome
c.110 Buddhist council in northern India leads to division into two branches, **Mahayana** and **Hinayana**
114 Trajan annexes **Armenia** and invades **Parthia**

The remains of Hadrian's Wall in northern England. The central portion of the wall occupies a high position that vastly enhances its defensive value.

Gulf near modern Basra, Iraq, where he is said to have remarked that, had he been younger, he might have pressed on to India. The newly conquered territories were organized as the provinces of **Mesopotamia** and **Assyria**, but they were already in revolt when Trajan returned home in 117. The Parthians rejected Trajan's **puppet king Parthamaspates**, and by the time Trajan died in August 117 almost all of his gains in the east had been lost. On his death-bed Trajan adopted Publius Aelius Hadrianus (**Hadrian**), the governor of Syria, effectively appointing Hadrian as his successor.

In 109, Trajan appointed the historian **Pliny the Younger** (61–*c.*112) as his personal representative to govern **Bithynia-Pontus** on the Black Sea coast of Anatolia. This was a controversial move, as Bithynia-Pontus was theoretically a senatorial province. The provinces of the empire had been divided between the emperor and the senate at the accession of Augustus in 27 BCE, with the emperor receiving only the provinces that held legionary garrisons. This division of the provinces persisted into the time of Trajan. Pliny stayed in Bithynia-Pontus for at least two years, trying to sort out the finances of the main cities, which had fallen into confusion. His letters to Trajan are an invaluable insight into the imperial government of the time.

TRAJAN'S SUCCESSOR HADRIAN (r.117–135) rejected his predecessor's policy of expansion and concentrated on better defence of the **imperial frontiers**. In 122, Hadrian visited Britain, where there had been frontier troubles. He ordered the building of a huge barrier from the Solway Firth in the west to the River Tyne in the east. It took governor **Aulus Platorius Nepos** two years to complete **Hadrian's Wall** (part in stone, and part in turf), which ran 76 Roman miles (113 kilometres), and was equipped with a series of forts and milecastles for its garrison. Hadrian's Wall acted as the northern frontier line of Roman Britain for the next 40 years.

The **Parthian kingdom** was left in some confusion by the campaigns of Trajan. His puppet king, Parthamaspates, was expelled in 117, but the Parthian kingdom then seems to have been divided between **Vologeses III** (r.105–147) who ruled the eastern portion, and **Osroes** (r.117–129) then **Mithridates IV** (r.129–140) in the west. There was no further conflict between Parthia and Rome for the time being.

985

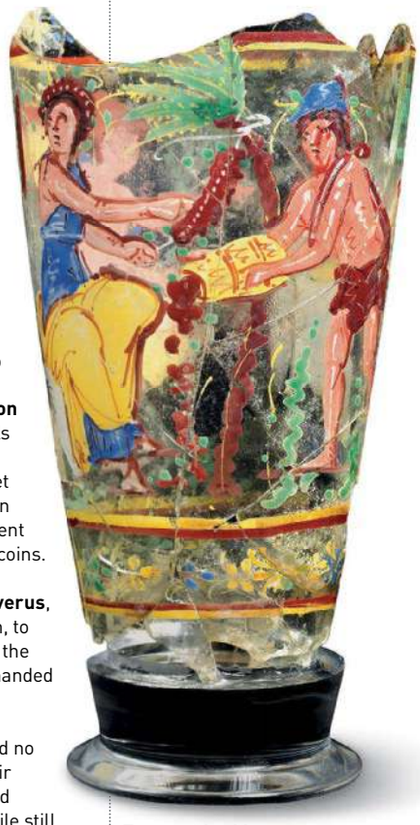
THE NUMBER OF **VILLAGES RAZED** DURING THE **BAR-KOCHBA REVOLT**

In India, the **Kushan empire** expanded enormously under **Kanishka** (127–140), who conquered Magadha and campaigned against the Chinese in Central Asia; his inscriptions are found from the Oxus river in Afghanistan to as far south as Varanasi and Sanchi. He was a strong patron of Buddhism and presided over the **fourth Buddhist Council**, as well as building a great stupa at his capital Purushapura (Peshawar).

Hadrian's ban on circumcision, his plan to turn Jerusalem into the Roman town of Aelia Capitolina, and his intent to ban Jewish religious practices in Jerusalem caused a furious **revolt in Jerusalem** in 132, as religious Jews rose up against religious reforms. Led by **Shimon Bar Kochba**, the rebels had early successes against Rome. They set up the beginnings of an independent government and minted their own coins. In response, Hadrian summoned **Julius Severus**, the governor of Britain, to conduct a war against the rebels. Severus commanded an army formed of detachments from 12 legions. The rebels had no large towns under their control, and so adopted **guerrilla warfare** while still attempting to defend the smaller forts they held. In 135, the rebel's last main stronghold at **Bethar was captured** amid great slaughter, after which the revolt petered out. Hadrian proceeded with his plan to **outlaw Judaism** in Palestine, and many of the Jews who had survived the rebellion fled abroad.

HADRIAN (76–138)

Hadrian came from a Spanish background and was the adopted son of his predecessor, Trajan. He was mocked by some for his grecophile tendencies, and was the first emperor to sport a beard – a Greek fashion. Hadrian was the first emperor to travel widely throughout the Roman empire, giving him first-hand knowledge of the provinces, from Britain to North Africa.



Treasured goblet
This beautiful vase was found in Kapisa (Bagram) near Kabul, which was the Kushan summer capital in the 1st century.

115 Jewish revolt in Cyrenaica against Roman rule

117 Trajan dies

117 Hadrian abandons **Mesopotamia** and **Assyria**

118 Hadrian puts down an **uprising of the Roxolani** in Moesia

120–127 Hadrian embarks on **seven-year tour** of his empire

122 Building of **Hadrian's Wall** in northern Britain begun (completed 126)

125 Gautamiputra Satakarni of the **Andhra dynasty** (in eastern Deccan, India) destroys the Shaka kingdom of Maharashtra

125 Chinese General Pan Yong reconquers the **Tarim Basin** from the Hsiung-nu of Central Asia

132 Second Jewish Revolt (to 135) led by Shimon Bar Kochba

135 Hadrian **recaptures Jerusalem** and expels its Jewish population

135 Kushan attempt to capture the Tarim Basin repelled by the **Chinese**

200 THOUSAND THE TOTAL POPULATION OF TEOTIHUACÁN AT ITS PEAK

The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán in modern Mexico.

The ruins of Hatra, which was a Parthian-controlled city.

THE CITY OF TEOTIHUACÁN IN THE VALLEY OF MEXICO experienced **massive growth** during the 1st and 2nd centuries, with its population reaching over 80,000 before 200. The city was planned on a grid, with **two huge pyramids** – of the Moon and the Sun – at either end of the main street. The Teotihuacán II phase of the city (0–350) saw the building of the enormous **Temple of Quetzalcoatl** and the acquisition of an empire, with Teotihuacán dominating vast areas of Mexico and overseeing client kingdoms as far south as Guatemala.

Hadrian had adopted **Antoninus Pius** (86–161) as his son and successor, a stop-gap until Antoninus's relative, **Marcus Aurelius** (121–80), was old enough to rule, but Antoninus survived Hadrian by 23 years, and became Roman emperor in 138. He was famed for his moderation and rarely left Rome. Disturbances in **Dacia** (in present-day Romania) around 140 and an uprising in North Africa in 145 did not unduly disturb the empire's calm. Antoninus extended the frontier in both Scotland and Upper Germany, ordering the construction of a new turf barrier around 160km (100 miles) to the north of Hadrian's Wall (see 188–135 BCE) in Britain. This **Antonine Wall** was 63km (35 miles) in length. The Hadrian's Wall garrison was moved north to a new set of forts, but their stay was short – Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus Pius's successor, ordered a **pull-back to Hadrian's Wall** around 161, where the Roman frontier of Britain remained until the 5th century.

As **Christianity** grew, so did the problem of defining a single doctrine. Among the alternative doctrines that sprang up in the 2nd century was **Marcionism**, which taught that the God of Christians was distinct from the Jewish God of the Old Testament and that Jesus Christ did not have a human nature. **Justin Martyr** (*c.*103–165) argued that Christianity was the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy and that Christians were the new chosen people. Justin also wrote to Marcus Aurelius, seeking to explain Christian doctrine.

Mexican mask
This sumptuous mask from Teotihuacán bears the smooth, flat features that are characteristic of work from the city.

63 KILOMETRES THE LENGTH OF THE ANTONINE WALL IN SCOTLAND

MARCUS AURELIUS SUCCEEDED TO THE ROMAN THRONE jointly with **Lucius Verus** in 161. Marcus was the more capable of the two, but it was Lucius who was sent, in 162, to rescue the situation in the east after the governor of Cappadocia was defeated and killed by the Persians following a **disastrous invasion of Armenia**. By 163–164 Lucius had brought Armenia back under Roman control, and renamed its capital Kaine Polis ("New City"). A new pro-Roman king was installed there before the legions moved on, pushing deeper into Persian territory, taking Edessa in Mesopotamia, and reaching the **Parthian capital** of **Ctesiphon** in 165. The Roman general **Avidius Cassius** (*c.*130–175) burnt the Parthian palace and then turned back westward. A swathe of Parthian territory down the Euphrates River was annexed as far east as Dura Europos (in southeastern Syria). However, victory celebrations were short-lived, for the troops brought the **plague** back to Rome and by 167 it had **spread**

> **"IF IT IS NOT RIGHT, DO NOT DO IT: IF IT IS NOT TRUE, DO NOT SAY IT."**
>
> **Emperor Marcus Aurelius**, from *Meditations*, 161–180

136–137 Invasion of Cappadocia by the Alans from southeastern Russia fails

138 Hadrian succeeded by adoptive son **Antoninus Pius**

143 Roman frontier in Britain is moved north to the **Antonine Wall**

147 Celebrations held for the **900th anniversary** of the foundation of the city of **Rome**

c.150 Kushans become vassals of the Parthians

c.150 Han dominion over Central Asia re-established

c.150 Christianity spreads in North Africa

c.150 Peak of the **Nok culture** in Nigeria

154–155 Revolt of the **Brigantes** of northern Britain against Roman rule

155 Roman–Parthian **peace** following Parthian attempt to conquer Armenia

159 Rise to power of **eunuch factions** in Han China

160 The Roman **Rhine frontier** extends beyond the Neckar valley (in modern Germany)

161 Marcus Aurelius becomes Roman emperor, with **Lucius Verus** as co-emperor

c.161 The Antonine Wall line in Britain is abandoned and **Roman frontier** returns to Hadrian's wall

162 Parthians place their candidate on Armenian throne and attack **Persia**

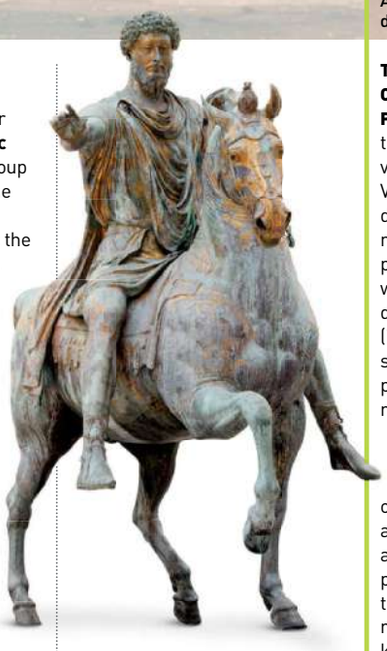
162 Revolt of the Germanic **Chatti**

A painted stucco of the Moche's most important god, Al Apaec, who is often depicted with the fangs of a snake.

widely throughout the **Mediterranean**.

Barely had the Parthian War ended than the **Marcomannic War** began. In early 167, a group of Germanic warriors from the **Langobardi** and **Obii** tribes crossed the Danube to attack the Roman province of Pannonia. They were pushed back fairly easily, but in spring 168 Marcus Aurelius resolved to visit the region to assess the situation. Two more Germanic tribes, the **Marcomanni** and **Quadi** were threatening to force their way across the frontier unless they were admitted to settle in the empire, but Marcus's presence deterred them. However, the expedition was cut short by the death of Lucius Verus from plague in early 169. Marcus returned to Italy, but was back in Pannonia later in the year to launch a **massive offensive** across the Danube. It was a disaster, with the Romans suffering around 20,000 dead and the Marcomanni and Quadi pouring into Italy, where they laid siege to Aquileia. Far from providing an easy victory for Marcus, the war dragged on for another 10 years.

In **China**, the **eunuch faction** at court had become increasingly powerful and had even engineered the murder of the emperor Shaodi in 125. Under **Emperor Huandi** (146–68) a series of natural disasters weakened the authority of the central government, and the emperor relinquished active control of government to the eunuchs. In 168, an attempt by **Dou Miao**, regent for the 12-year-old emperor **Lingdi** (r.168–89), to have the eunuchs massacred failed – the plot was betrayed and Dou Miao was forced to commit suicide. Several hundred of Dou Miao's supporters were executed and, with its enemies now dead, the eunuch faction was able to exercise power almost unopposed.



Marcus Aurelius
This statue shows Marcus Aurelius adopting a pose of victory, something he claimed but never quite achieved in his Marcomannic Wars.

THE MOCHE CULTURE EMERGED ON THE COAST OF NORTHERN PERU between 100 and 200. From their bases in the Peruvian valleys of Moche, Chicama, and Virú, these people spread to dominate almost the whole northern coastline. A warlike people, they sacrificed those whom they captured to their deities, including **Al Apaec** ("the decapitator"). They were skilled workers in gold and their pottery has an extraordinarily realistic quality.

The **Roman Empire** was in **crisis** in 170 – the Marcomanni and Quadi had occupied parts of northern Italy, and an invasion by the **Iazyges** and **Costobocci** had overun large parts of the Balkans. The Romans trapped the **Marcomanni** as they returned across the Danube and killed many of them. The **Quadi sued for peace later in 171**, but the Marcommani remained recalcitrant, forcing a **new offensive in 172**. The forces of Marcus Aurelius could never quite strike the killer blow, and by 175 the war had reached a **stalemate**.

In May that year, rumours that Marcus Aurelius had died while on campaign prompted a revolt by **Avidius Cassius**, the governor of Syria. Avidius was **declared emperor** in Egypt, and received support in Arabia, as well as in his own province of Syria. Critically, however, he failed to secure the support of **Martius Verus**, the governor of Cappadocia, whom he had fought alongside during the Parthian War.

As Martius's army approached, the loyalty of the usurper's troops wavered, and in July **Avidius Cassius was murdered** by a disaffected centurion, putting an end to his short-lived but dangerous rebellion. There were suggestions that Marcus's wife **Faustina** encouraged Avidius, as she feared for her husband's health and worried her own son Commodus was unfit to rule.

Free from the distraction of Avidius's revolt, Marcus Aurelius returned to the Danube in 177. In the winter of 179–80, the **Roman army** occupied positions deep across the Danube, and it looked as if Marcus might be able to create two new Roman provinces – Marcomannia and Samartia. However, Marcus was old and tired – he died in March 180. His son **Commodus** brought the war to a rapid conclusion, allowing him to return to Rome.

Moche stirrup jar
This jar has a typical Moche "stirrup" attached to the back of it. The realism of the paddling figure is characteristic of the culture's ceramics.

THE GERMANIC TRIBES

The Romans had faced Germanic tribes ever since they had reached the Rhine at the time of Julius Caesar. German groups across the Danube, such as the Quadi and Marcomanni, proved troublesome in the 2nd century, but by the late 3rd century new and more dangerous confederations of Germanic tribes arose, such as the Franks, Alamanns, and Goths, who overran much of the Roman Empire by the mid-5th century.

165 Avidius Cassius, Roman governor of Syria, **invades Parthia** and sacks Seleucia and Ctesiphon

163 Parthians expelled from **Armenia**

166 Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius's co-emperor, makes **peace with Parthia**

167 Germanic tribes invade northern Italy

167 Beginning of **Marcomannic War**

166 "**Roman**" **embassy** (of Syrian merchants) arrives in **China**

167 Devastating outbreak of **plague in Rome**

168 Death of Emperor Huandi; **Han empire** in serious **decline**

173 Revolt of the **Boukoloi** ("shepherds") in Egypt – possibly because of economic difficulties

173 Serious outbreak of **plague in China**

175 Revolt of **Avidius Cassius**, who declares himself Roman emperor. He is killed by one of his own soldiers

177 Marcomanni and **Quadi** renew war on the Danube frontier

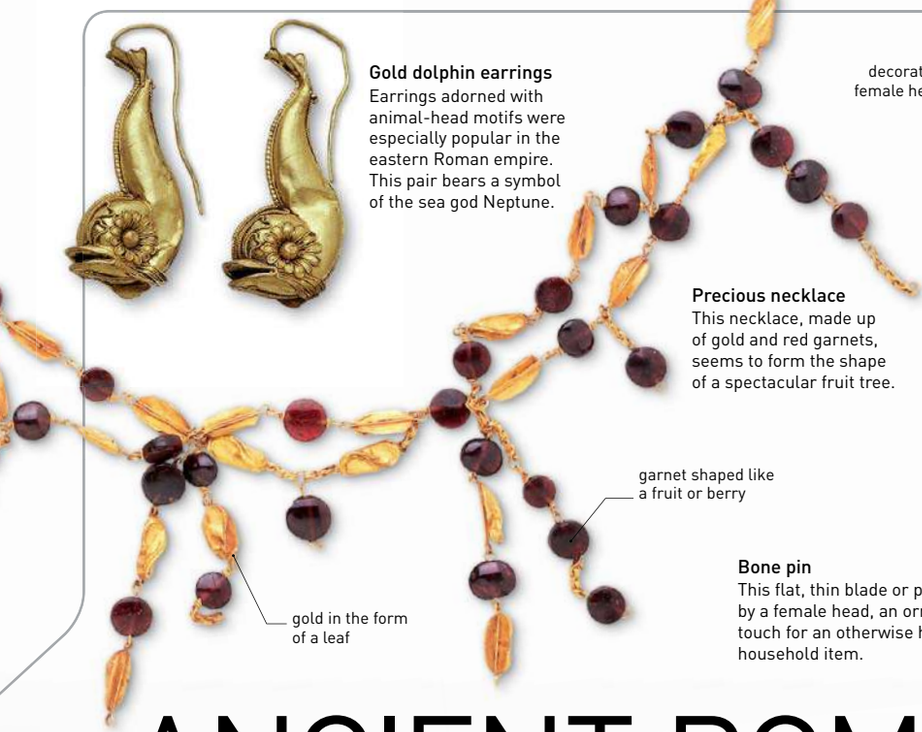
177 Martyrdom of 47 Christians in the Roman arena at Lyons

179–180 Marcus Aurelius wins decisive **victory** over the Marcomanni near Vindobona (Vienna)

180 The Goths first settle near the Black Sea

180 Death of Marcus Aurelius. He is succeeded by his son **Commodus**, who makes peace with the Marcomanni

Gold dolphin earrings
Earrings adorned with animal-head motifs were especially popular in the eastern Roman empire. This pair bears a symbol of the sea god Neptune.



Precious necklace
This necklace, made up of gold and red garnets, seems to form the shape of a spectacular fruit tree.

Bone pin
This flat, thin blade or pin is topped by a female head, an ornamental touch for an otherwise humdrum household item.

Plumb line
This bronze weighted plumb line was attached to a groma, an instrument used by the Romans to survey straight lines.

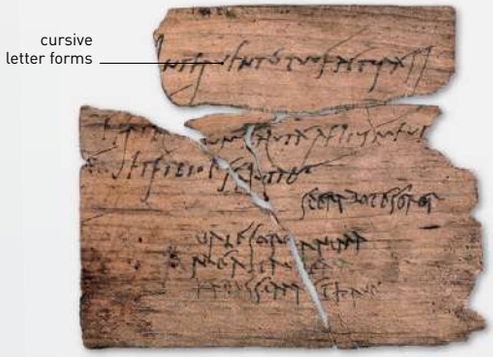
ANCIENT ROME

THE ROMANS SPREAD A RICH MATERIAL CULTURE THROUGHOUT THEIR VAST EMPIRE

As Roman political control steadily expanded outside Italy, in its wake came the Roman way of life. Roman surveyors laid out new cities, local elites took up Roman practices, and the masses attended gladiatorial spectacles. On a domestic level, Roman fashions in clothing and accessories also spread.

Although many of the territories that the Romans conquered initially resisted, the populations of these provinces, particularly the former ruling classes, gradually adopted many Roman customs. Influential men became Roman citizens, towns were given new public buildings such as baths and courthouses, Roman legionary garrisons were established in strategic places, and new trade routes brought luxury goods from Rome. As a result, similar Roman artefacts have been found across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, dating from around the 1st century BCE to the 5th century CE.

Ocean baths
The most important Roman baths were adorned with lavish mosaics, such as this one of Oceanus, the ocean god, from Sabratha in Libya.



Wooden tablet
This type of tablet, made from very thin wood, was used by the Roman military for everyday letters and record-keeping. This one was found at Vindolanda in England.

Bronze dividers and foot-rule
Dividers allowed engineers to copy scale plans or models at twice or half their size – the gap between the lower points is always twice that between the upper points. The rule, which was one Roman foot long (29.6cm/11.7in), folded for easy carrying.

Procession bowl
This lekane, a type of shallow dish, is decorated with a scene of half-man, half-goat satyrs in a procession in honour of Bacchus, the god of wine.

satyr carrying cymbals

modern-looking grater

Ancient grater
Cheese played an important part in the Roman diet. Graters such as this one were invented to allow cheese to be used as a topping on other foodstuffs.

Amphora
The Romans transported liquid goods such as oil and wine in amphoras, a type of large, double-handled storage jar.

flask containing oil

strigil for scraping

Bathing tools
At the baths, a Roman's skin was oiled and then scraped to remove sweat and dirt. A ring was used to transport the tools.

Short sword
The Roman military sword, or *gladius*, had a short blade – ideal for attacks at close range. It was used by soldiers and some gladiators.

short blade

ivory grip

long iron shank

handle shaped for throwing

Military javelin
Each Roman legionary carried two of these *pila* (javelins). The javelin's iron head was designed to bend on impact to prevent an opponent from removing it from shields or wounds.

Imperial coins
Coins bearing the head of the current emperor (here Augustus and Claudius) acted as powerful propaganda tools across the empire, showing even the masses an image of their ruler.

Latin text

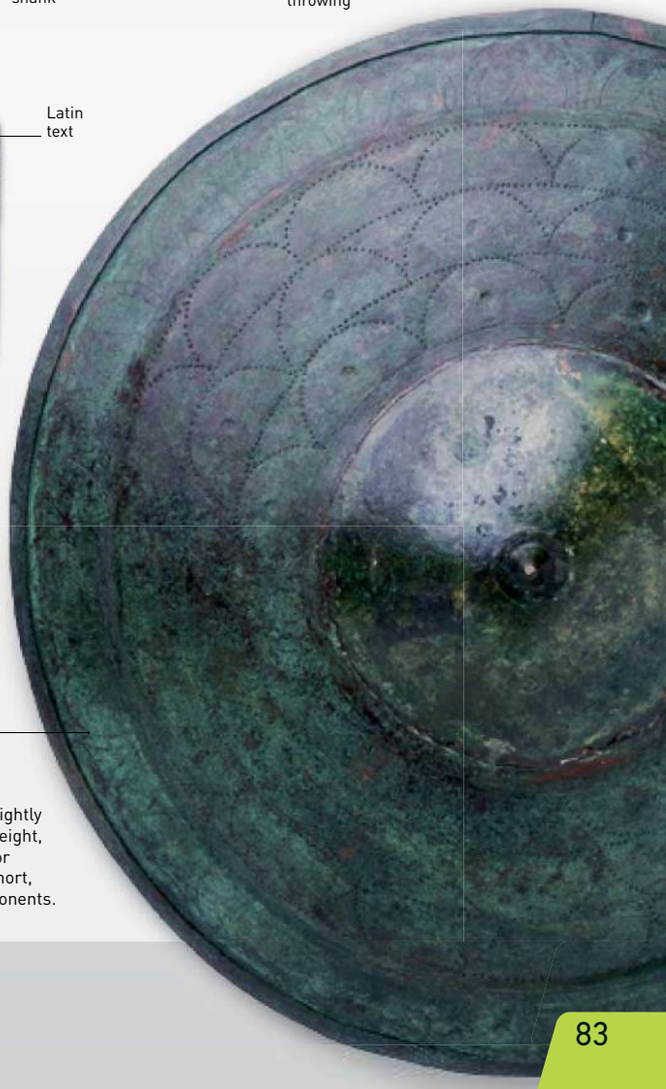
Proof of citizenship
Non-citizens who served 25 years in the Roman army were awarded citizenship and given bronze diplomas such as this one to record the grant.

gridded visor to protect face

Gladiator helmet
Roman gladiators bore a variety of arms and armour. This sort of helmet was worn by a Thracian, a type of gladiator whose equipment was modelled on that of ancient Thracian warriors.

Sling pellets
Roman legionaries normally relied on their swords, but auxiliary light infantry used other weapons to devastating effect, such as these metal sling pellets.

small size would have offered little protection



Bronze gladiator shield
Thracian gladiators – a class of lightly armed gladiator – carried lightweight, round shields such as this one for defence, and a scimitar, with a short, curved blade, to attack their opponents.

181–192

In this engraving by Giovanni Stradano, Emperor Commodus shoots an arrow to subdue a leopard. Fighting in the arena as a gladiator was his great passion.

IN CHINA, INCREASING DISSENT caused by the corruption of the eunuchs at the court of Han Emperor Lindi (r.168–89) and a succession of natural disasters led to the outbreak in 184 of a major insurrection, named the **Yellow Turban revolt** for the colour of its supporters' headgear. Up to 400,000 rebels swept westward towards the capital. Another uprising fuelled by the **Five Pecks of Rice** sect then succeeded in taking over Sichuan in the southwest. Although the Yellow Turbans had been largely crushed by early 185, the **control of the Han emperor was ever weakening**. After Lingdi died in 189, he was replaced by his younger half-brother **Xiandi** (r.189–220) but he never exercised real power. Instead, control of the empire fell to Han general **Cao Cao**, who contended for 30 years with **a series of rival warlords**, notably **Liu Bei** in the southwest and **Sun Quan** in the south.

18

THE AGE AT WHICH **COMMODUS** BECAME **SOLE EMPEROR**

Commodus (r.180–92), Marcus Aurelius's son, was the first Roman emperor to succeed his father for 90 years but he proved to be **a disastrous choice**. In 182, after an assassination attempt on him, apparently organized by his sister Lucilla, Commodus became **increasingly despotic**. Many senators who were implicated in the plot were executed and control of the government fell into the hands of **Tigidius Perennis, the praetorian prefect** (the commander of the imperial bodyguard). There were minor wars in Britain and in Dacia (much of modern Romania), but in 185 Perennis was suspected of a plot to make his own son emperor and was executed by his troops. Commodus increasingly **devoted himself to fighting** in the arena as a **gladiator**, while the imperial chamberlain **Cleander** dominated government and sold public offices to the highest bidder. The man in charge of the grain supply, **Papirius Dionysius**, engineered a shortage that led to Cleander's downfall. This did not result in a more stable government as his replacement only lasted a short time before being murdered. Commodus increasingly identified himself with **Hercules** (the Greek hero) and renamed Rome after himself – *colonia Commodiana*. At the end of 192, the praetorian prefect **Laetus** was convinced that Commodus was planning to have him killed and on **New Year's Day 193** took the initiative and had the emperor **poisoned** and, when that did not work, **strangled**.

193–211

The Severan arch in Leptis Magna (in modern Libya) commemorates a visit by the North African emperor to his home town.

> **“** BE **HARMONIOUS** WITH **EACH OTHER, ENRICH** THE **SOLDIERS, IGNORE** ALL **OTHERS...** **”**
>
> **Septimius Severus,** dying words as quoted in Book 77 of Roman historian Dio Cassius's *Roman History*, 211

IN 193, AFTER THE MURDER OF COMMODUS, Helvius Pertinax (126–93), the prefect of the city, was declared emperor but he was murdered after three months. This was followed by rival claimants to the throne engaging in an auction outside the praetorian camp to decide who would be emperor. **Didius Julianus** (133–93) won, but his reign was short, as almost immediately the frontier armies rebelled: that on the Danube proclaimed **Septimius Severus** (*c.*145–211) emperor, while the Syrian legions raised their commander **Pescennius Niger** (*c.*135–94) to the imperial throne. Severus reached Rome first and, after granting the title of Caesar (junior emperor) to **Clodius Albinus**, governor of Britain, he turned east where, in spring 194, his armies defeated Niger at the **Battle of Issus** in Syria. Severus stayed in the east and in 195 attacked the Parthian Empire. But he was forced to return west to deal with Albinus who had revolted, and who was killed near Lugdunum (modern Lyon, France) in 197. Severus then returned to Parthia, this time occupying the capital Ctesiphon in 197. He pushed the line of Roman control towards the Tigris and created the **new province of Mesopotamia**.

Trouble in Britain brought the ageing emperor to the province in 208. A large-scale Roman advance forced the Caledonians and Maetae north of the provincial frontier to come to terms in 209, but they soon broke the peace and a new campaign was launched in 210. Severus was by now very ill, and his son Caracalla took over. In February 211 **Severus died** in Eboracum (modern York, England) and handed succession jointly to sons Caracalla and Geta. After the Scottish war both rushed back to Rome, but their **joint rule was short-lived**: Caracalla had Geta murdered in December 211.

Buying loyalty
The larger bribes offered to the troops by Didius Julianus meant that he won the auction to be emperor.

JULIA DOMNA (170–217)

The daughter of a Syrian high priest, Julia Domna married Septimius Severus in 187. A prophecy had predicted that she would wed an emperor and so it turned out. Forceful and intelligent, she failed to mediate between her sons Caracalla and Geta after their father's death and to prevent Geta's murder. When Caracalla was killed she deliberately starved herself to death in protest, a move that rallied support for the remaining Severan family.

183 Perennis **made prefect** of the Praetorian Guard

183 Revolt **of the Yellow Turbans** in China

185 As Commodus's rule grows tyrannical, **Perennis is executed** for suspected plots against the emperor

189 General Dong Zhuo **ends eunuch rule** in China

189 Codification of sayings from the **Laws of Moses, the Mishnah**, carried out by Rabbi Yehudah

190 Accession of Xiandi, **last Han emperor**

c.190 Ironworking spreads as far **south** as Zimbabwe and Botswana

c.192 Establishment of **Champa kingdom** in Southeast Asia

193 Assassination of Commodus; Pertinax chosen emperor but deposed by Didius Julianus; civil war leads to **Septimius Severus** being **declared emperor**

193 Pescennius Niger, Roman governor of Syria proclaimed **emperor** by his legions

194 Severus defeats Pescennius Niger, who is executed; **Syria divided** into two provinces

198 Northern Mesopotamia becomes **Roman province**

197 Severus defeats Clodius Albinus at Lugdunum (Lyon); then **invades Parthia**

c.200 Chinese **occupation of Korea ends**; native Korean states of Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla start to grow

c.200 Rise to prominence of **Mayan city of Tikal**

c.200 Teotihuacán is **largest city in the Americas**

206–208 Bandit **Bulla Felix** conducts reign of terror in southern Italy

208–210 Campaigns of **Severus in Scotland**

211 Severus dies; succeeded by his sons Geta and Caracalla. Caracalla **murders Geta** to assume sole power

A carving of the Buddha from Sarnath in North India, where a school of Buddhist art flourished under the Kushans.

IN INDIA, THE AREA CONTROLLED BY THE KUSHAN DYNASTY began to shrink after the death of King Kanishka in 140, and particularly severe territorial losses were suffered under Huvishka (r.160–90). Kushan rule finally collapsed under Vasudeva (r.190–225) when Persian invaders swept through northwestern India. Although Kushan kings continued to rule a much-reduced realm for a further century, their influence was purely local and their **heyday was at an end**.

In Rome, Caracalla's government was unpopular. Among his measures was the **Antonine Constitution of 212**, by which citizenship was granted to almost all free males in the empire. After a successful campaign on the Rhine (in 213), Caracalla ventured further afield, arriving in Egypt in 215. For some unknown reason, he became enraged and ordered the **massacre** of the citizens of **Alexandria**. The next year he launched an invasion of Parthia. His praetorian prefect **Opellius Macrinus** came to suspect that Caracalla wanted him dead, so he persuaded a disaffected soldier to murder the emperor. After Caracalla's murder, **the army declared Macrinus emperor**. There was much residual loyalty towards the Severan family, and a revolt broke out in Syria, which aimed to put **Elagabalus** (203–22), grandson of Julia Domna's sister Julia Maesa, on the throne. Macrinus lost support and in June 218 he fled to Cappadocia where he was killed. In 221, Elagabalus **adopted as his heir** his cousin Alexanius. When the two fell out in 222, the army backed Alexianus and Elagabalus was murdered. Alexianus became **Emperor Alexander Severus** aged 13.

In Persia, Parthian rule had been weakened, both by plague and by the effects of successive Roman invasions. In 207, the kingdom had been divided into two when Vologeses VI's brother set himself up as a rival king, **Artabanus V**; and a further Roman invasion in 216 ravaged much of the province of Media. Taking advantage of this disorder, the ruler of the southwestern province of Pars, **Ardashir**, expanded his territory and finally defeated Artabanus V *c.*224. Ardashir I was then declared king (r.224–42) as the **first ruler of the Sasanian dynasty**. Although Persia was temporarily weakened by a civil war, the Sasanians proved to be **much tougher adversaries** to the Romans than the Parthians ever had been.

In China in 220, Cao Cao's son Cao Pi **forced Xiandi to abdicate**. Within two years Cao Pi, Liu Bei, and Sun Quan would each declare himself emperor. The **Han dynasty** and China's unity were at an end.

2,000
THE NUMBER OF **BATHERS** THAT COULD USE THE **BATHS** OF **CARACALLA**

Arch of Caracalla
Originally the arch was topped by a figure of the emperor riding in a chariot. It stands in Volubilis, the main town of Roman Mauretania Tingitana (in modern Morocco).

Bronze diploma
Diplomas were issued to auxiliary soldiers in the Roman army, granting them citizenship. This practice ceased after the Antonine Constitution.

The Sasanian Empire in Persia
After rapidly acquiring the former Parthian Empire, the Sasanians fought a series of wars with the Romans over control of Mesopotamia.

KEY
- Sasanian Empire at greatest extent
- East Roman Empire in 3rd century

212 Caracalla grants **Roman citizenship to all free males** in the empire

213/214 Caracalla **campaigns against the Alamanni**, a new Germanic confederacy

214 **Edessa** in Mesopotamia becomes **Roman colony**

215 Caracalla orders **massacre of the citizens of Alexandria**

216 Romans **invade Parthia**

217 Caracalla assassinated near Edessa; **Macrinus**, head of Praetorian Guard, **declared emperor**

218 **Macrinus defeated** after resistance rallied by Julia Maesa, whose grandson **Elagabalus becomes emperor**

c.220 **Han dynasty collapses**; replaced by kingdoms of **Shu**, **Wu**, and **Wei**

222 Pope Callistus killed during **anti-Christian riots in Rome**

222 **Elagabalus killed** by Praetorian Guard; replaced by his cousin Alexander Severus

224 Ardashir proclaimed **"King of Kings"** in Persia

224 Parthian rule collapses after revolt of Ardashir I, governor of Pars, who founds the **Sasanian dynasty**

225 Christian theologian **Tertullian** dies (born *c.*160)

226 Chinese emperor **Cao Pi** dies (b.187)

230 **Ardashir I** invades Syria

25 THE NUMBER OF **ROMAN EMPERORS** THAT **RULED** BETWEEN **235** AND **284**

Roman emperor Gordian III succeeded his father and grandfather.

A mural of St Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage at the height of the Decian persecution. He was martyred in 257 during a campaign under Valerian.

IN CHINA, THE FINAL COLLAPSE OF THE HAN DYNASTY IN 220 was followed by 350 years of instability. **The Three Kingdoms** period (220–80) saw China divided into the **Wei** kingdom of the north; (initially under Wei Wendi (r.220–26); the **Shu Han** kingdom in the west whose first ruler was Shu Han Xuande (r.221–23); and the southern **Wu** kingdom under Wu Wudi (r.222–52). Wei Wendi was a capable ruler, but his successors struggled to contain attacks by northern tribesmen.

In 235, the Roman emperor Alexander Severus and his mother Julia Mamaea were **murdered** by mutinous troops, putting an **end to the Severan dynasty**. The uprising's ringleader, **Maximinus Thrax** (r.235–38), an officer from a humble background, was proclaimed emperor, but he spent most of his reign raising funds to reward his troops for their support. This time marks the start of a period of "**military anarchy**" in which Rome had dozens of emperors, most of them short-lived rulers who were raised up by the frontier armies and just as quickly deposed and killed. A rebellion in 238 in North Africa proclaimed the province's elderly governor as **Emperor Gordian I**, but he was quickly and brutally put down. The Senate declared Maximinus deposed and proposed **Pupienus** and **Balbinus** as candidates. Popular sentiment favoured Gordian I's grandson **Gordian III** (r.238–44), so all three briefly shared the throne. Balbinus and Pupienus were killed soon after, leaving Gordian III to rule alone. His six-year reign **briefly restored** some semblance of **stability** to the empire, but he was killed while leading an invasion of Persia in 243–44.

Compounding the Roman Empire's difficulties was the appearance of **barbarian confederacies** among the Germanic peoples of the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Principal among these were the **Alemanni**. In 213, Caracalla campaigned against them; by 260 they were able to **invade Italy** itself.

Art from the Three Kingdoms
High artistic achievements, such as this fine statue, were a feature of the late Han dynasty. Its collapse in 220 did not result in an equivalent decline in China's artistic output.

China under the Three Kingdoms
Although the Wei kingdom faced the greatest challenges among the three kingdoms, it would eventually conquer the Wu and the Shu Han.

PERSIA ATTAINED A POSITION OF RENEWED STRENGTH under Shapur I (r.241–72). In 244, he won a decisive battle against Gordian III at Misiche near Ctesiphon. Shortly after, Gordian III was killed and replaced by his army commander Philip (or **Philip "the Arab"**). Philip made peace with Shapur but had to pay a large ransom to escape Sasanian territory. His successors broke the terms of the agreement, so in 256 **Shapur I invaded Syria** and captured the towns of Dura Europos and Antioch. **Valerian**, who by then was emperor (r.253–60), soon retook Antioch. But, in 260, he fell into a trap and was **imprisoned by Shapur**. The Romans were left in disarray and Shapur's armies advanced as far as Iconium (modern Konya, Turkey).

The western part of the Roman Empire also faced increasing pressure. The Romans suffered invasions of Dacia (much of modern Romania) by the **Carpi** people from *c.*214. The Carpi, together with a new group, **the Goths**, took part in a raid across the Danube in 239–40. In 248, Emperor Philip **withdrew an annual tribute** he had been paying the Carpi and the Goths, prompting them to pour into Moesia (modern Bulgaria). Philip sent **Quintus Decius** to deal with the invasion; he was so successful that his troops declared him emperor. Early in 249, Decius marched to Rome and defeated and killed Philip. Hearing of the Roman civil war, the **Goths invaded again**, causing Decius to return to the Balkans in 250. Under their warleader **Cniva**, the

Relief of Shapur I
In this relief, Shapur I triumphs over the Roman emperors Gordian III and Valerian. After Valerian's capture, Shapur is said to have used him as a footstool for mounting his horse.

232 Romans **expel Ardashir I** of Persia from Mesopotamia and Cappadocia

235 Serious **Alammanic raids** on the upper Rhine

238 Gordian I declared emperor but lasts only 22 days; **Gordian III** becomes Roman emperor on his grandfather's death

241 Shapur I becomes ruler of Persia

242 Goths **dominate southern Russia**

247 Philip "the Arab" presides over Rome's **1000th anniversary celebrations**

249 Collapse of **Wei dynasty** in China

249 Decius becomes Roman emperor after he revolts against Philip

c.250 Tiahuanaco becomes important urban centre in Peru; beginnings of **Classic Maya** civilization

253 Alamanns and Frankish barbarians invade Gaul

235 Start of "**military anarchy**" **in Rome**; more than 20 Roman emperors in 50 years

238 Carpi and Goths cross the Danube and ravage Moesia

239 Sasanian Ardashir I captures cities of Carrhae and Nisibis

241 The prophet **Mani** (founder of Manichaeism) begins preaching in Persia

242 Kushans invade Sasanian province of **Bactria**

244 Gordian III murdered on Persian expedition; **Philip "the Arab"** becomes Roman emperor

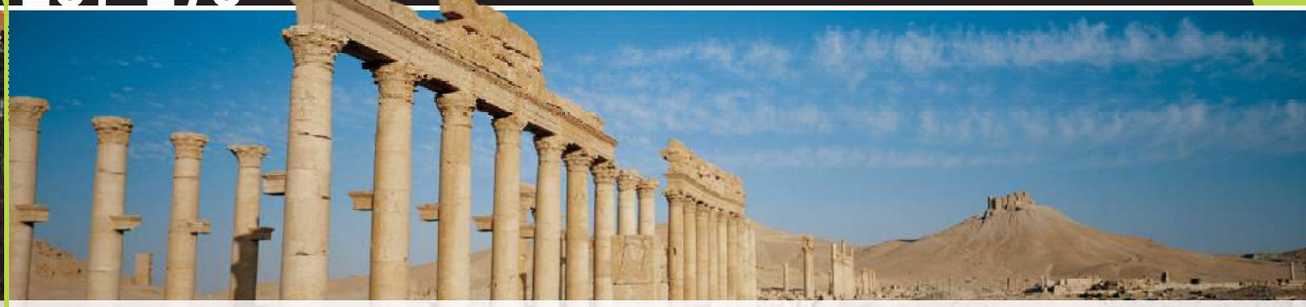
247 In Japan, Yamato **Queen Himiko** attacks kingdom of Kunukoku

c.250 Extension of power of Aksum (in modern Ethiopia) under **King Aphilas**

251 Roman emperor **Decius is killed** in battle against the Goths

256 Sasanian Persian forces **take Antioch**

261–275



The main colonnade at Palmyra, which grew rich on tariffs paid by merchants who plied the desert route that passed through the Syrian city.

SHAPUR I (d.272)

Shapur's early leadership experience came in a role assisting his father, Ardashir, in mopping up support for the Parthian Arsacid dynasty. Shapur's defeats of Gordian III in 244 and of Valerian in 260 established a temporary Persian dominance in Syria and Mesopotamia. He used the many Roman prisoners captured in 256 at Antioch to build the new town of Veh Antiok Shapur ("Shapur's town, better than Antioch").

Goths ravaged the province of Moesia, laying siege to the main town of Nicopolis (modern Nikopol, Bulgaria). The campaign went badly for the Romans, ending in defeat and Decius's death at the **Battle of Abrittus** in 251.

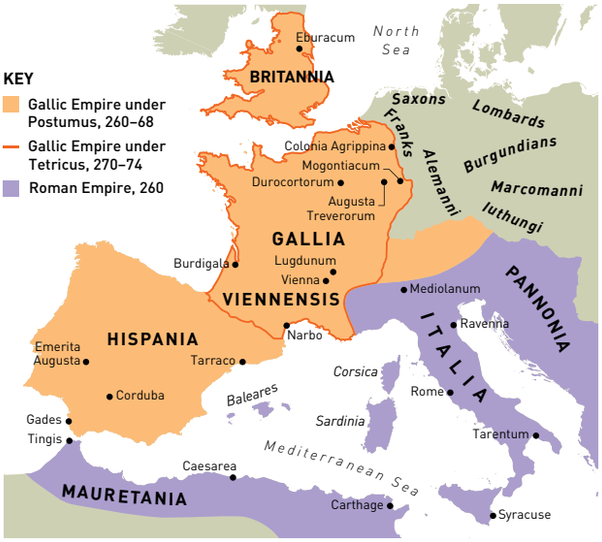
In Japan, the **Yamato kingdom** emerged on the plain of Nara (in central Japan) around 250. Its rulers were interred in large burial mounds, and its armies conquered most of central Japan. Much of what is known comes from Chinese sources, who name the Queen of Yamato in 238 as **Himiko**.

VALERIAN'S CAPTURE BY THE PERSIANS in 260 proved disastrous for the western part of the Roman Empire as well as the east. Valerian's son **Gallienus** (r.260–68), struggling to contain an invasion of Italy by the Germanic **Iuthungi** had no resources to reinforce the Rhine frontier, which was being breached by **Alemmanic and Frankish raiders**. The Governor of Germania Inferior, **Marcus Postumus**, revolted and killed Gallienus's son Saloninus, who had been left in charge of Gaul and Germany. Postumus **declared himself emperor**, but unlike previous usurpers did not march on Rome, instead setting up a separate **Gallic Empire**; this initially controlled Britain, Spain, parts of western Germany, and Gaul. He established a form of government that mirrored that of the official empire, complete with its own Senate. In 269, Postumus was murdered by his own troops and replaced by his praetorian prefect Victorinus. Gallienus – faced with **Gothic invasions** and the revolt of **Zenobia of Palmyra** in the east – was **never strong enough** to put an end to the Gallic Empire. In 268 he was murdered by the army and replaced by Claudius II Gothicus (r.268–70), who was too busy fighting in the Balkans to deal with Gaul. Only under **Aurelian** (r.270–74) was the Roman Empire strong enough, and by then the Gallic Empire was weakened, with its last ruler, Tetricus (r.270–74), facing splits in the army. In 274, Tetricus was captured near Châlons, and the **Gallic Empire was reabsorbed**.

In the east, a serious **challenge to Roman rule** emerged after 260. The city of **Palmyra** (in Syria) proved Rome's **only reliable ally** against the Sasanian advances of Persia. Its ruler **Septimius Odaenathus** (*c.*220–67) received a number of Roman titles, including *Corrector Totius Orientis* ("Marshal of the entire East"), and invaded the Sasanian Empire in 262 and 266. Odaenathus died in 267; and his wife **Zenobia** (r.267–73) created **an empire of her own**. By 269, her armies had taken Syria and Egypt, and in 271 she declared her son **Vaballathus** emperor. Aurelian marched east and soon rolled back the Palmyrene gains, besieging Palmyra in spring 272. Zenobia was captured while trying to escape, and Palmyra was sacked in 273 when it tried to throw off Roman rule again.

In China, **Yuandi** (r.260–64) restored Wei's fortunes by conquering the Shu Han. But soon after he was overthrown by one of his own generals, **Sima Yuan**, who founded the **Western Jin** dynasty and took the title Wudi (r.265–89). His armies crushed and annexed the Wu kingdom in 280, thus **briefly reuniting China**.

The Gallic Empire
Postumus began the Gallic Empire in control of Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Spain. By its collapse in 274, the last ruler, Tetricus, had lost Spain.



Sepulchral relief from Palmyra
The Palmyrenes buried their dead with exquisite and realistic personal portrayals; the dead were interred in tower tombs outside the city.

> "YOU DEMAND **MY SURRENDER** AS THOUGH YOU WERE **NOT AWARE** THAT **CLEOPATRA** PREFERRED TO **DIE A QUEEN** RATHER **THAN REMAIN ALIVE.**"
>
> **Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra,** to Aurelian Augustus from *Historia Augusta c.*375–400

257 Decius issues edict **forbidding Christian worship**

258 Martyrdom of **Cyprian**, Bishop of Carthage

260 Shapur I defeats Valerian and takes him prisoner; **Gallienus** declared Roman emperor

260 Breakaway **Gallic Empire established** by Postumus

265 Western Jin dynasty takes over the territory formerly ruled by the Wei

267 Murder of **Odaenathus of Palmyra**, Syria, a former Roman ally

267 Massive Gothic incursion into Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece

267 Odaenathus's widow **Zenobia comes to power** in Palmyra, revolts against Rome, and takes much of Asia Minor

269 Emperor **Claudius II wins major victory** against the Goths at Naissus

271 Roman emperor **Aurelian** orders the evacuation of Dacia; he **recovers Egypt** for Rome

271 Zenobia has her son, **Vaballathus**, declared emperor

273 Aurelian **suppresses the revolt of Palmyra**

274 Tetricus defeated by Aurelian; the **Gallic Empire is reunited** with the Roman Empire

275 Murder of Aurelian; he is succeeded by **Tacitus**

275 Franks and Alamanns again ravage Gaul

275 St Anthony retreats to a solitary desert life, near the site of his future monastery

276–283

> **PROBUS** WAS ALMOST A **SECOND HANNIBAL** BECAUSE OF HIS **KNOWLEDGE OF WARFARE...**

Aurelius Victor, Roman historian and official, in *De Caesaribus*, *c.*360

IN CHINA, THE FIRST EMPEROR OF THE WESTERN JIN DYNASTY, Wudi (r.265–89), was a strong ruler who secured trade routes to the West and built a bridge over the Yellow River to improve communications. However, the **wars** of the **Three Kingdoms period** (see 231–244) had impoverished the state and as the tax burden rose, many peasants fled to landowners for protection, resulting in the **rise of private armies**.

In the Roman Empire, Emperor Aurelian – who was murdered in 275 – was followed by two short-lived emperors – Tacitus and Florianus – before Probus took power in 276. Within two years, Probus had **defeated the Goths** on the Danube and **pushed back the Franks** from the Rhine. A planned campaign against Persia was frustrated in 281 by the revolt of two usurpers in the West: Bonosus and Proculus. Despite his military successes, in 282 **Probus was murdered by his own troops**, who were resentful at being forced to work on civil engineering projects near Sirmium (in modern Serbia).

Jin sitting bear sculpture
The first half of the Jin dynasty under Wudi gave China a period of comparative peace and stability, which allowed the arts to flourish.

284–300

The Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacán (near modern Mexico City) was built some time after 200 at one end of the city's Avenue of the Dead; the Pyramid of the Sun sits at the other end.

IN 284, THE ROMAN ARMY IN ASIA MINOR PROCLAIMED DIOCLES, the former commander of the imperial bodyguard, **Emperor Diocletian** (r.284–305). In 285, he defeated **Carinus** (the then emperor of the Western Empire) and started **a radical reorganization of the empire**, reforming the army, and subdividing provinces. The challenges on the frontier were too great to be faced alone; in 285, he appointed **Maximian** (250–310) **to rule alongside him**, first as Caesar (junior emperor) then as Augustus (senior emperor). Other problems with Britain's break from the empire under **Carausius** in 286, convinced Diocletian that more changes were necessary. In 293, he and Maximian appointed two Caesars: **Constantius Chlorus** (r.293–306) to assist Diocletian in the Western Empire and **Galerius** (r.293–311) to be Maximian's junior in the East. This **tetrarchy** (four emperor system) enjoyed early successes in Britain (296) and in Egypt (298). In 294, Diocletian **reformed the coinage**, reissuing new bronze and silver coins, and in 301 he issued an **Edict on Maximum Prices** to try to curb rising inflation. Unlike his other measures, this one failed.

Persian frieze
The Paikuli frieze celebrates the victories of Narseh in Armenia and justifies his deposition of predecessor Vahram III.

After the death of Shapur I in 272 Persia faced **a period of political instability**. In 293, **Narseh** (r.293–302) ascended to the Persian throne. He resolved to recover land in Armenia and Mesopotamia that had been lost to the Romans. He launched a major invasion in 296, **defeating** the Caesar **Galerius** in 297. The next year, however, Galerius smashed Narseh's army in Armenia and captured the Persian ruler's family. Galerius marched as far as Ctesiphon, which he captured in 298. Narseh was forced to make peace (**Treaty of Nisibis**). Persia remained at peace with the Romans for 40 years.

In the Valley of Mexico, the city of **Teotihuacán reached the peak of its power** around 300. Its main street – the Avenue of the Dead – ran between the Pyramid of the Moon and the Ciudadela (which may have been the palace of the ruler) and was lined with the residences of the lords of the city.

30 SQUARE KILOMETRES THE **AREA** OF **TEOTIHUACAN CITY** AT ITS **PEAK**

276 Probus becomes Roman emperor after brief six-month reign of Tacitus

277 Mani (founder of Manichaeism) is **crucified by the Persians**

277–79 Probus **expels the Franks** from Gaul, and puts down unrest in Egypt and Illyria

279 Jewish scholars in Tiberias **publish** a collection of Jewish laws and doctrines, **the Talmud**

280 Western Jin conquer the south of China and **unite the country** under their leader, Sima Yao

282 Probus killed at Sirmium in Illyria after a mutiny

283 Emperor **Carus invades Persia** and takes Seleucia and Ctesiphon; he dies mysteriously near Ctesiphon

284 Diocletian declared emperor after the murder of Carus's son Numerianus

285 Diocletian reorganizes the empire, **dividing power between two emperors**; he rules the East and appoints Maximian to rule the West

287 Carausius seizes control of Britain and part of northern Gaul

288 Diocletian **makes peace with Persia**

c.290 Elite **Moche burials** at Sipán, Peru

291 Western Jin allow **steppe peoples** from north of the Great Wall to **settle inside China**

293 Stela 29 at **Tikal** is the first monument with the **Maya calendar inscription** of the "Long Date"

293 Diocletian establishes **tetrarchy**

296 Narseh becomes ruler of Persia

297 Persians invade Armenia and defeat Roman emperor Galerius

c.300 Armenia becomes first country to accept **Christianity as a state religion**

c.300 First minting of coins in Aksum (in ancient Ethiopia)

c.300 Growth of **Yamato state** in Japan

c.300 Bantu peoples in Africa begin to **herd cattle**

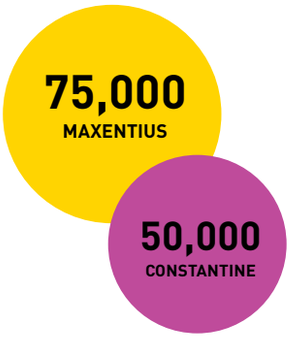
c.300 Settlement of **Rapa Nui** (Easter Island)

This early 16th-century fresco of the Battle of Milvian Bridge is in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Before the battle, the emperor Constantine is said to have seen a Christian monogram in a dream predicting his victory.

SINCE PERSECUTIONS IN THE 250S AND 260S, THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY had experienced some 40 years of tranquillity in the Roman Empire. All this changed in 303 when Diocletian issued an **edict** ordering the **destruction of churches** and the handing over and **burning of Christian books**. A sterner edict followed, calling for the arrest of Christian clergy, and one in 304 ordered that all Christians offer a sacrifice to the pagan gods. Devout Christians could not accede to these demands, and many of them were martyred.

In 304, Diocletian fell seriously ill, and in 305 he announced that he and Maximian would abdicate. **Constantius Chlorus** and **Galerius** would take over as Augusti, while the new Caesars were to be **Maximinus** (Galerius's nephew) and **Flavius Severus** (Galerius's army colleague). The new tetrarchy soon unravelled. **Constantius died** in Eboracum (modern York, England) in July 306 and the troops there proclaimed his son **Constantine** the new Augustus. By October, **Maxentius** (r.306–12), the son of Maximian, was crowned emperor in Rome. Severus was killed trying to retake Rome from Maxentius, and Maximian restored himself to the position of Augustus. In 308, the **Conference of Carnuntum** was called to settle the disputes, presided over by Diocletian, who came out of retirement. Constantine accepted a demotion to Caesar in the West, with **Licinius** as Augustus (r.308–24), while **Maximin Daia** became Galerius's Caesar in the East (r.310–13). This new arrangement was no more succesful than the old one.

Palace of Diocletian
Diocletian built the great palace at Split, Croatia, for his retirement after his abdication in 305. Here, he tended his cabbages.



Battle numbers at Milvian Bridge
Maxentius's forces outnumbered those of Constantine, but his army became trapped between Constantine's men and the river.

In 311, **Galerius died** and **Maximin became Augustus** in the East. He ordered **renewed measures against Christians**. Constantine, meanwhile, invaded Italy and in October 312 defeated and killed Maxentius at the **Battle of Milvian Bridge**. Before the battle, Constantine is said to have dreamt of the **Chi-Rho symbol** and ordered his troops to mark it on their shields.

Licinius and Constantine met at Mediolanum (modern Milan) in 313, where they agreed to share power and issued the **Edict of Milan**, which granted toleration to all forms of worship, in effect **legalizing Christianity**. Licinius then turned East and defeated Maximin Daia, securing control over the Eastern provinces. The alliance between Constantine and Licinius broke down in 316; they patched up a peace in 317, and for six years the Roman Empire relapsed into an uneasy calm.

In China, Wudi's successor **Huidi** (r.290–306) was mentally disabled and so a succession of regents contended for imperial control. Huidi's brother **Huaidi** (r.307–12) invited the northern **Xiongnu tribesmen** to help him against the competing Chinese factions, but they took him prisoner. The **last Western Jin emperor Mindi** (r.313–16) saw the Xiongnu sack the capital of Chang'an (modern Xi'an); the Jin moved south, where **Yuandi** (r.317–23) became the **first Eastern Jin emperor** in 317.

Chi-Rho symbol
The monogram of Chi-Rho, the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek, became an important early symbol of Christianity.

Early spread of Christianity
Christianity spread in the 2nd and 3rd centuries until there were strong Christian communities in Anatolia, southern Gaul, Italy, Egypt, and the province of Africa (Tunisia).

KEY
Areas strongly Christian by 325

301 Diocletian issues his **price edict** in an attempt to control inflation

303 Beginning of Diocletianic **persecution of Christians**

304 Xiongnu invade China, leading to breakdown of order in the north and **start of Sixteen Kingdoms** period (to 439)

305 Diocletian abdicates and forces Maximian to do likewise; Galerius and Constantius replace them

306 Constantius dies on campaign in Britain; his son **Constantine** declared emperor by the troops

307 Civil war breaks out in the Roman Empire; **Maxentius declared emperor** by the Praetorian Guard

308 Conference of Carnuntum declares Maxentius deposed and replaced by Licinius as legitimate emperor in the Western Roman Empire

309 Accession of **Shapur II** in Persia

311 Xiongnu sack Luoyang, China

311 Donatist schism breaks out in Africa over status of those Christians who made sacrifices to the Roman gods to avoid persecution

312 Battle of Milvian Bridge: Constantine defeats **Maxentius** and takes control of Western Roman Empire

313 Edict of Milan: Constantine affirms freedom of religious worship. **Licinius** is sole ruler of **Eastern Roman Empire**

314 War breaks out between Constantine and Licinius; Licinius loses lands in the Balkans

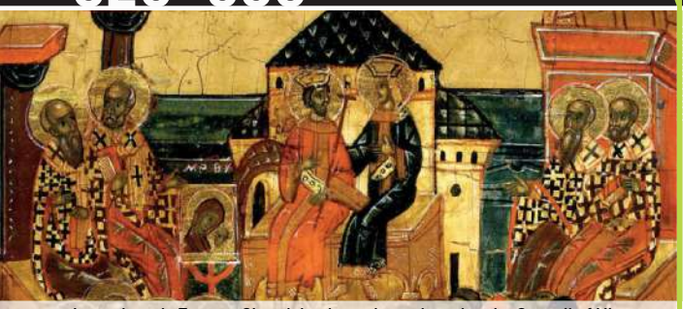
316 Jin dynasty abandons northern China to Xiongnu; **last Western Jin emperor** Mindi (r.313–16) dies

317 Yuandi becomes **first Eastern Jin emperor**

318 Arius of Alexandria puts forward doctrine that denies the fully divine nature of Christ

319 Constantine **campaigns against barbarians** on the Rhine

320–330



It was largely Eastern Church leaders who gathered at the Council of Nicaea (depicted here) in 325; only eight Western bishops made the journey there.

CHANDRAGUPTA I ASCENDED TO THE THRONE of a small kingdom in the western Ganges Plain in 320. Through an **advantageous marriage** to Princess Kumaradevi of the powerful Liccachevi dynasty and by conquest, he **expanded his realm** to include most of the central Ganges, from Magadha (in southern Bihar) to Prayaga (in Uttar Pradesh). His descendants, the Guptas, ruled northern India for almost 150 years.

The Column of Constantine
The sole surviving monument from the forum that Constantine built for his new city is this column, which sits in central Istanbul today.

Having taken up the **cause of Christianity** in 313, the Roman Emperor Constantine (r.280–337) found that Christians themselves were far from united in **doctrine or organization**. Constantine called a church **council at Nicaea** in western Asia Minor in 325 to establish (and impose) orthodoxy in the face of a division over **Arianism** (the theology of Arius, who held that Jesus Christ was subordinate to God the Father). As well as Constantine, about 300 church leaders attended, and Arius's views were condemned.

14

THE NUMBER OF **DISTRICTS** IN CONSTANTINOPLE

After **defeating Licinius** (r.308–24) in 324, Constantine **founded a new capital** for the Eastern Roman Empire at the ancient city of **Byzantium**, strategically sited between Europe and Asia. He demolished pagan temples and built new churches, such as Hagia Sophia, providing public buildings to rival those of Rome. The city of **Constantinople** (modern Istanbul) was publicly dedicated on 2 April 330. It was the seat of the Eastern Emperors for over 1,000 years.

331–355

> **“** IN OTHER MEN… TASTE FOR **SLAUGHTER** SOMETIMES **LOSES** ITS **FORCE**… IN **CONSTANTIUS** IT BECAME MORE **VIOLENT.** **”**
>
> **Ammianus Marcellinus** (d.*c.*330) writing on the character of the Emperor Constantius II in *The Later Roman Empire*

8

THE NUMBER OF **TYPES** OF **PURE-GOLD COINS** ISSUED BY **SAMUDRA-GUPTA**

IN 335, SAMUDRAGUPTA (r.335–75) SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER Chandragupta I as ruler of the Gupta domains in northern India. An inscription he set up in Prayaga survives, recounting a **series of campaigns** he fought in **Uttar Pradesh** and **Mathura**, both of which were annexed to the Gupta kingdom. He also made conquests down the east coast of India, as far as **Madras**, and subdued **West Bengal** as well as parts of **Rajasthan** and the **Punjab**. Various other regions acknowledged his suzerainty, making him the **most powerful Indian ruler** since the Mauryas.

Constantine died in 337, having accepted Christian baptism only on his deathbed. He had made no definite provision for **succession**, leaving his sons to divide the empire between them: **Constantine II** (r.337–40) held Spain, Gaul, and Britain; **Constans** (r.337–50) ruled Italy, and **Constantius II** (r.337–61) governed the Eastern Empire. Their reigns began with a **massacre at Constantinople** in which almost all of their father's other male relatives were killed in order to remove any possible rivals. Constantine II, who was the eldest, tried to assert his seniority, but **died during an invasion of Italy** in 340. Constans then took control of the entire Western Empire, where he was faced with a series of hard-fought campaigns against **Frankish invaders in Gaul**, and problems in **Britain**, which led him to visit the far-flung province (the last undisputed Roman Emperor to do so) in 343.

Disputes between the two surviving brothers, particularly one over the status of **Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria** (whom Constantius II had exiled, but Constans wanted restored), soured all relations between them. In 350, a senior military officer, **Magnentius**, revolted at Augustodunum in southern Gaul (modern Autun, France) and **Constans was killed**. Distracted by a war against Persia, Constantius II tolerated the upstart initially, but in 351 he moved against him. Since Constantius II had no heir, he promoted his cousin **Gallus** – one of the few survivors of the massacre of 337 – to the rank of Caesar in 351 and left him **in charge in the East**, while he campaigned against Magnentius in the West. Magnentius's army was **defeated at Mursa** (in present-day Croatia); Italy and North Africa were rapidly recovered, and in 353 **Magnentius committed suicide** in Gaul.

Gold Gupta coin
Many Gupta coins contain images of horses, a possible reference to the ritual horse sacrifice performed by some Gupta rulers.

For the next seven years **Constantius II ruled the empire alone**, mainly preoccupied with Frankish incursions into Gaul, the revolt of the usurper Silvanus in 355, and **a series of church councils** that sought to resolve doctrinal disputes (Constantius II favoured Arianism over the traditional orthodoxy).

In the end, Gallus proved too ambitious and in 354 he was **deposed and executed**. Constantius II turned instead to Gallus's brother **Julian**, a studious youth with a penchant for pagan philosophy. In 355, after Silvanus's revolt, **Julian was despatched to Gaul** as Caesar, where he proved surprisingly effective at combating Frankish raiders.

320 Accession of **Aksumite king Ezana**

320 Chandragupta I, founder of the Gupta Empire of India, ascends throne

321 Constantine campaigns in former Roman province of **Dacia**

324 Constantine defeats Licinius to become sole Roman emperor; he founds new capital at **Constantinople**

325 Pachomius founds **monastery of Tabenne** in the Egyptian desert

325 Constantine summons **Council of Nicaea** to determine orthodox Christian doctrine

327 Constantine has his **son Crispus put to death** for plotting

329 Saint Peter's basilica in Rome completed

333 Ezana of Aksum **converts to Christianity**

335 Consecration of **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, Jerusalem

c.335 Chandragupta I succeeded by **Samudragupta** who creates an empire in the Ganges plain

336 Church council at **Tyre condemns Athanasius**, patriarch of Alexandria, for his attitude to Arians

337 Death of Constantine: his three sons divide the empire

337 Shapur II starts new war against the Romans

340 Constans **defeats his brother** Constantine II and takes the whole Western Empire

341 Widespread **persecution of Christians** in Persian Empire

346 Bishop **Athanasius** restored to Alexandria

350 Constans murdered by military commander Magnentius

350 Hephthalites (White Huns) **invade Persia** and **India**

c.350 Ulfilas **translates Bible** into Gothic

355 Alemannic invasion of Gaul causes widespread devastation

355 Julian made junior emperor (Caesar) and **Governor of Gaul**

356–360

The acropolis at Tikal, one of the greatest surviving series of ruins in the Mayan world.

IN ETHIOPIA, THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM became one of the earliest states to **embrace Christianity** outside the Roman Empire. The Syrian Christian missionary Frumentius converted the king, Ezana (r.320–60) to Monophysitism (a doctrine emphasizing a single nature of Christ, the divine). A letter from Constantius II to Ezana in 357 has survived, **urging Ezana to shift his allegiance to Arianism** and to replace Frumentius with an Arian bishop – evidence that the Roman emperors took seriously the religious loyalties of their neighbours. Ezana conducted military campaigns beyond his borders; an inscription speaks of expeditions against neighbouring "Gaze, then the Agame, and the Siguene", and it seems his armies may have occupied **Meroë city** (in northern Sudan). Enriched by such conquests and the control of trade from sub-Saharan Africa and Arabia, **Aksum** would **dominate the region** until the 7th century.

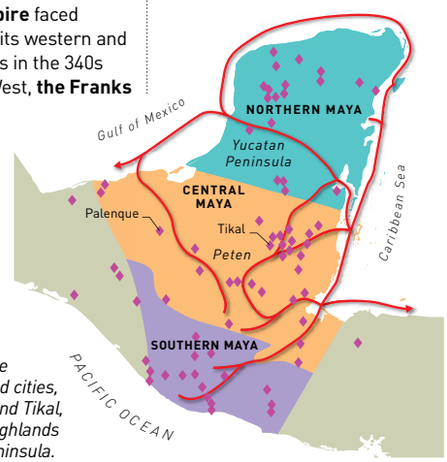
The **pre-Classic Maya kingdoms** of Guatemala and Mexico underwent a collapse some time in 200–300, with populations declining and building activity ceasing. But the region soon recovered, with the emergence of **a new phase** in Maya civilization, the Classic period (300–900), in which a series of **powerful kingdoms emerged**. Their great urban centres, such as those at Tikal (in Guatemala) and Palenque (in Mexico), are characterized by **huge pyramidal temples and palace complexes** set in a central "acropolis". The Mayans developed a **hieroglyphic** form of writing which survives on many of the **stelae** (carved stone slabs) they set up to commemorate important events; in Tikal the first such dated monument is from 292. The first named king of Tikal is **Siyaj Chan K'awiil I** (*c.*305), and by the reign of Chak Tok Ich'aak I (r.360–78), Tikal was by far the **largest and most powerful** of the Classic Maya cities.

The **Roman Empire** faced invasions on both its western and its eastern borders in the 340s and 350s. In the West, **the Franks** began to push across the Rhine, and in the early 350s they overran part of the Rhine frontier, occupying some old Roman fortresses. **Caesar Julian** engaged in a series of **campaigns against the Franks** (356–59) and drove them from most of the territory they had taken.

In the East, **conflict** broke out again between the Romans and the Persians, under **Shapur II** (r.309–79), who took advantage of the political turmoil in the Roman Empire in the 350s. In 359, Shapur II advanced further west and **took the great Roman fortress of Amida** (modern Diyarbakir, Turkey). Other towns were captured and their populations deported to Persia, threatening the Roman position in the East.

Shapur II hunts a stag
Sasanian rulers commissioned lavish silver items depicting themselves hunting wild beast as a display of their royal power.

16 SQUARE KILOMETRES THE AREA OF THE CITY OF TIKAL *c.*400



Maya kingdoms
Classic Maya culture originated in lowland cities, such as Uaxactun and Tikal, but spread to the highlands and the Yucatán peninsula.

356 Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria **exiled once more**

356 St Antony, leader of monastic movement in Egypt and "Desert Father" **dies** (born *c.*251)

356–57 Constantius II **issues laws** banning divination and sacrifices, and closing pagan temples

357 Church council at Sirmium issues **pro-Arian creed**

358 Huge earthquake devastates western Asia Minor

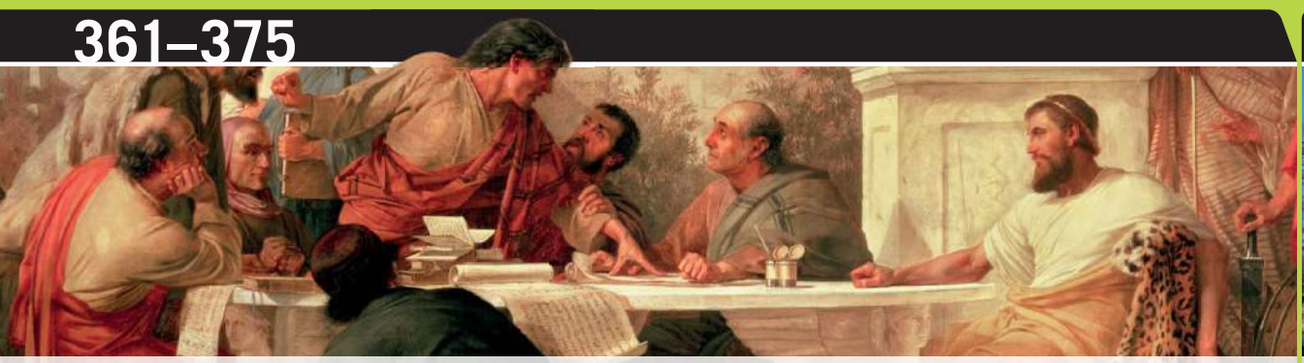
358 Constantius II **campaigns** across Danube against **Quadi and Sarmatians**

359 Shapur II invades Syria and captures Amida

359 Church councils at Rimini (of bishops) and at Seleucia in Cilicia agree the **homoïs formula** – a compromise between Arian and orthodox Nicene Christians

360 Julian's troops declare him **emperor** in Paris

360 Council of Constantinople promulgates pro-Arian creed



Here Emperor Julian is seen in religious debate. He attempted to sow discord among Christians by decreeing the return of those who had been exiled for religious reasons.

IN CHINA, THE EASTERN JIN DYNASTY (317–420) brought comparative stability to the south of the country. Although many of the emperors were short-lived, the bureaucracy in the southern capital of Nanjing functioned efficiently and the period saw a **cultural flowering**. Artists such as Gu Kaizhi (*c*.345–406) painted masterpieces such as the *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Palace Ladies*, as well as producing works on the theory of painting. **Northern China**, on the other hand, was **highly unstable**, divided between the Sixteen Kingdoms, most of them ruled by **nomadic groups**. The Eastern Jin emperors alternated between a defensive stance towards the Sixteen Kingdoms and aggressive campaigns, notably under Mudi (r.345–61) who retook Sichuan and Luoyang. All these gains were lost, however, under Emperor Aidi (r.362–65). In 383, the Eastern Jin (under Xiaouwudi) would be forced to repel a major invasion in the north of the country.

16

THE **NUMBER OF KINGDOMS** IN **CHINA** FROM **304** TO **439**

In the Roman Empire, **Julian** was proclaimed **Augustus** by his troops in 360, so he was a direct challenge to Constantius. The threat from the Persians, who were advancing through Asia Minor, was too great for Constantius to meet immediately. **He died** in November 361 as he was finally marching west to deal with the revolt. Now sole emperor, Julian immediately set about **restoring the role of paganism** in the Roman Empire, trying to establish a kind of pagan orthodoxy and an official pagan hierarchy of priests to counter Christianity's strengths. He reopened pagan temples, and **restored the right to sacrifice**.

In 363, Julian set out on **a campaign against Persia**, planning to punish its leader, Shapur II, for his attacks on the empire in 359–60. He reached Ctesiphon, but was then forced to retreat up the Tigris River. Being short of supplies, the Roman army suffered constant harassment from the Persians and, in one such skirmish, **Julian was killed**. The pagan reaction was over.

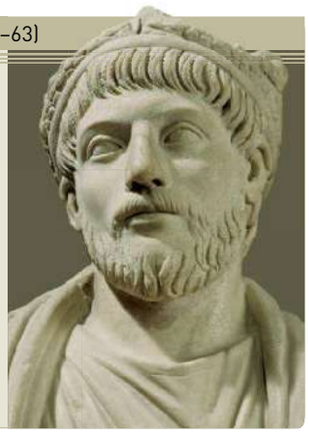
On Julian's death the army chose **Jovian** (r.363–64) as emperor, but he ceded key border provinces to Persia, which lost him popularity, and he died (probably murdered) within months. An officer of the imperial bodyguard, **Valentinian** (r.364–75), was then raised to the throne, and he selected his brother **Valens** (r.364–78) to be his **co-ruler**. Valentinian spent much of his reign along the Rhine dealing with Frankish and Alemannic invaders. He died in 375 after suffering some type of fit, brought on by his anger at barbarian Quadi envoys thought to have insulted him.

The Western Roman Empire was then subdivided between Valentinian's two sons **Gratian** (r.375–83) and **Valentinian II** (r.375–92). In the Eastern Empire, Valens was forced to spend most of the early 370s in Syria to contain the Persian threat, but growing trouble with barbarians along the Danube later forced him to turn to the Balkans.

Sarmatian dagger
This dagger belonged to the Sarmatians, a tribe of Iranian origin who specialized in horseback fighting, and were defeated by Valentinian I.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE (331–63)

The nephew of Constantine I, Julian was educated as a Christian but *c*.351 became a pagan under the influence of Maximus of Ephesus. When Julian unexpectedly became emperor in 363, he tried to restore paganism in the empire, including banning Christians from teaching literature. He became known by Christian writers as "the Apostate" for his perceived betrayal of Christianity.



The church of Hagia Eirene in Istanbul was built by Constantine I.

> "… THE **BARBARIANS,** [ARE] LIKE BEASTS … **BROKEN LOOSE…** OVER THE **VAST EXTENT…** OF **COUNTRY.**"
>
> **Ammianus Marcellinus,** on the Gothic invasion of the Balkans *c*.390

IN 376, LARGE GROUPS OF GOTHS ARRIVED AT THE DANUBE FRONTIER, pressing to be admitted to the Roman Empire. **The Huns**, a new nomadic group from Central Asia, were at their rear, and the Goths feared being squeezed between them and the imperial frontier. Emperor Valens did not wait for reinforcements before marching out to meet the Gothic army. On 9 August 378, near Adrianople, **the Romans met the Goths**, under Fritigern. Misled by the temporary absence of the Gothic cavalry, Valens attacked but his army was surrounded by the returning barbarian horsemen. Valens was killed and the **Eastern army destroyed,** leaving the Balkans open to the Goths.

Gratian reacted by turning to **Theodosius**, a Spanish military officer, who he appointed as his imperial colleague. For the next three years Theodosius patiently negotiated, bought off some groups, and struck militarily where he could. In 382, the two

362 Julian begins campaign to **restore pagan worship** in the Roman Empire

363 Julian **killed near Ctesiphon**

363 Jovian surrenders territory to the Persians

364 On death of Jovian, **Valentinian I** and **Valens** become emperors

368 Large-scale **invasion of Britain** by Picts, Scot, and Saxons is defeated by Count Theodosius

368 Campaigns against the Alemanni end in **Roman victory**

369 Sasanian king **Shapur II** occupies Armenia

***c*.370** Japanese invading force establishes a **colony at Mimana** in southern Korea

***c*.370 Huns begin to invade** Eastern Europe

373 Roman military officer **Theodosius** puts down a revolt in Morocco

373 Martin of Tours establishes **one of the first monastic communities** in Western Europe

373 Fu Jian, ruler of the Former Jin (one of 16 kingdoms) occupies Sichuan, Yunnan, and parts of Guizhou

375 Yax Nuun Ayiin becomes **ruler of Tikal**

375 Valentinian dies unexpectedly while negotiating with barbarian Quadi envoys

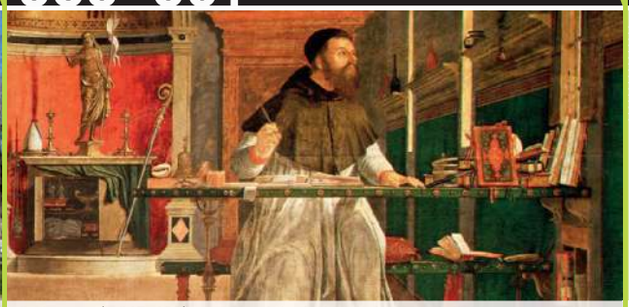
375 Samudragupta dies; Chandragupta II succeeds; the **Gupta Empire now dominates** north and central India

376 Fu Jian, of the Former Jin, **extends control** into Central Asia

376 Goths petition Valens to allow them to settle in the Roman Empire

378 Goths defeat the Romans under Valens at **Adrianople**

383–391



St Jerome (*c.*347–420) completed the *Vulgate*, the first definitive translation of the Bible into Latin, *c.*405.

sides agreed a truce, whereby the **Goths** were **allowed to settle** in the empire in return for providing troops for the Roman army.

The **Gupta Empire continued to expand** under Chandragupta II (r.375–415) in northern India. He fought against the Sakas, annexing much of northwestern India. He also made an **astute marriage alliance** that extended his realm to the southwest.

Iron pillar of Delhi
This iron pillar at Qutb complex on the outskirts of Delhi is said to have been erected on the orders of Chandragupta II.

IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THE MAYAN CITY OF TIKAL had reached the peak of its influence in the late 4th century. In 378, a foreign lord called **Siyaj Kak** arrived in the city, possibly from Teotihuacán. His arrival, which may represent a military conquest, led to the **death of Tikal's ruler** Chak Tok Ich'aak and the **destruction of** most of Tikal's **public monuments**. Siyaj Kak installed a new dynasty on the throne of Tikal, possibly drawn from the ruling house of Teotihuacán, with **Yax Nuun Ayiin** ("Curl Snout"; r.379–404) as the first ruler. Monuments depict him in northern Mexican, rather than Mayan, dress. Under his rule, Tikal's direct influence extended some 50 km (30 miles) away.

In the Western Roman Empire, **Gratian** had spent much of his time since the Battle of Adrianople (378) in northern Italy, where he **continued to act against pagans** in Rome, ordering the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate House in 382. In 383, he led an army north to face an invasion of Gaul by the Alemanni, but was then faced with **a revolt in Britain**, where the legions declared their commander **Magnus Maximus emperor**. Many of Gratian's commanders defected and in August 383 he was captured and executed by Maximus, who had crossed over to Gaul. **Theodosius**, fearful of trouble with Persia or a Gothic revolt in the Balkans if he moved west, **recognized Maximus** as his colleague. A peace with Persia in 386, however,

St Ambrose
A Roman nobleman by birth, Ambrose was Bishop of Milan from 374 to 397. He exercised a powerful influence over Theodosius I.

freed Theodosius to react when Maximus invaded Italy in 387. In August 388, he marched swiftly into northern Italy, **capturing Maximus** near Aquileia, and having him executed.

As well as campaigning against the Goths and Maximus, Theodosius was preoccupied with the **imposition of Orthodox Christianity**. He moved against the Arians, deposing the Bishop of Constantinople in 380 and calling a council in 381 in the capital, which reaffirmed the anti-Arian decisions of the Council of Nicaea (see 325). He connived in the **destruction of many pagan temples**, including the great temple of Serapis in Alexandria, and in 391 he **forbade all pagan sacrifices** throughout the empire.

392–400

> **"THE THICKER THE HAY, THE EASIER IT IS MOWED."**
>
> **Alaric the Goth,** speaking of his enemies *c.*400

IN 392, VALENTINIAN II, WHO HAD CONTINUED TO RULE OVER ITALY, was found hanged. His military commander Arbogast – suspected by some of Valentinian's murder – promptly made **Flavius Eugenius**, a middle-ranking official, emperor. Theodosius refused to recognize Eugenius, and in 393 he **invaded Italy.** To gain support in the Senate – where paganism was still strong – the Christian Eugenius **revoked** all of Theodosius's **anti-pagan laws**. But, in August 394, he was defeated by the Theodosian army at the **River Frigidus** near Aquileia. Theodosius did not enjoy his rule as sole emperor long, dying in January 395. The empire was then divided between his two sons: the older, Arcadius, taking the eastern part and his younger brother, Honorius, taking the western one. Although there was no clear intention to do so, this split marked a permanent division; after 395 no one emperor ruled the whole empire again.

The Goths had taken part on Theodosius's side at the Battle of the River Frigidus and felt they had not been sufficiently rewarded for their losses. In 395, they rose up, led by **Alaric** (r.395–410). Despite an attempt by **Stilicho** (*c.*365–408), the half-Vandal commander of the Western Roman army, to suppress them, the Goths escaped and marauded throughout Greece in 396. Stilicho moved against Alaric again in 397, but once more failed to defeat him. A **brief halt to the Gothic rampage** came after Alaric's appointment by the Eastern Roman government to *magister militum* (a senior general).

Divided in two
The split of the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western divisions in 395 was permanent. By 476, its Western part would be overrun by barbarians.

KEY
- Eastern Roman Empire
- Western Roman Empire

379 Theodosius appointed Eastern Emperor by Western Emperor Gratian

379 Shapur II dies

381 Second Council of Constantinople condemns Arianism

383 Theodosius signs peace with Goths, gives them land in exchange for military service

383 Magnus Maximus proclaimed emperor by legions in Britain (to 388)

384 Buddhism arrives in Korea

385 Copper mining and smelting begins at Kansanshi on Congo–Zambia border

386 The Toba Wei reunify northern China, ruling as the Northern Wei dynasty

388 Chandragupta II conducts war against the Shakas

390 Theodosius forced to perform public penance after massacre in an uprising in Thessalonica

391 Theodosius makes Christianity official religion of the empire

392 Emperor Valentinian II dies (b.371)

393 The Yamato of Japan overrun Silla and Paekche, Korea

394 Theodosius defeats and kills Eugenius, becoming sole emperor

395 Theodosius dies; the empire is divided in two

396 The half-Vandal general Stilicho becomes effective ruler of the Western Empire

397 Gildo begins major rebellion against Roman emperor Honorius in North Africa

399 Yazdegird becomes Persian ruler

c.400 Intensive period of building at Teotihuacán

400 Revolt of the Goths under Gainas; gains power, but he is soon expelled and killed by the Huns

CLASSICAL TRADE

FLOURISHING TRADE BETWEEN CONTINENTS A WORLD APART

The growth of Roman power in the Mediterranean, the unification of China under the Qin and Han, and the establishment of the Parthian Empire in Iran created three large political blocs, which provided stable conditions under which very long-distance trade routes could flourish.

The expansion of Han power westward in the 2nd century BCE brought the Chinese into contact with new powers they called An-hsi (Persia) and Li-chien (Rome). A Chinese embassy reached the court of Mithridates II of Parthia around 115 BCE. In the wake of diplomats came merchants, carrying the Chinese silk for which both Parthia and Rome had an insatiable appetite. The main Silk Route ran from China through Central Asia, down into Persia and then across Roman-controlled Syria towards the ports of the Mediterranean.

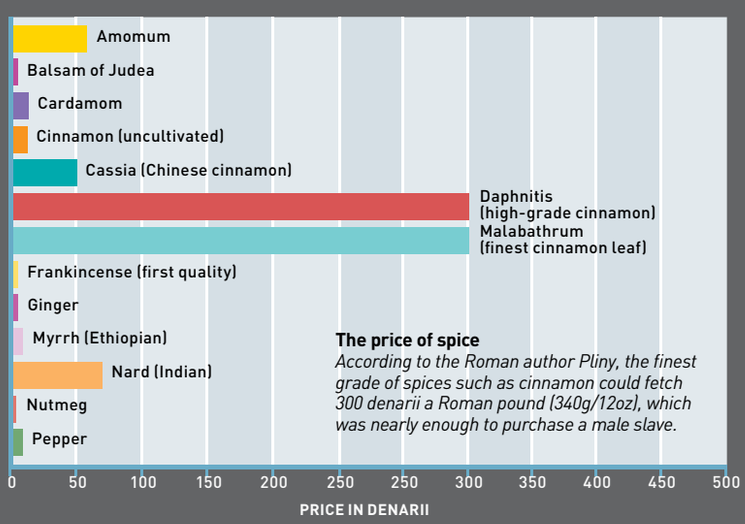
A thriving trade also spanned the Indian Ocean, transporting spices from the East Indies and southern India to ports in Africa and southern Arabia; from here a land route led up through Petra, in present-day Jordan, to Syria. Control of these trade routes was very lucrative, and towns that lay on them were able to exact heavy tolls from merchants, which they used to build spectacular public monuments.

Further west, in the Mediterranean, expensive goods such as fine wine were carried by sea; in general land transportation was expensive, and bulky, low-value products tended to be produced and consumed locally.

13,000 KILOMETRES
THE LENGTH OF THE TRADE ROUTE FROM **CHANG'AN** TO **ROME**

ROMAN TRADE

The expansion of the Roman Empire to cover much of Europe, western Asia, and North Africa created largely peaceful conditions in which both internal and external trade could flourish.



The price of spice
According to the Roman author Pliny, the finest grade of spices such as cinnamon could fetch 300 denarii a Roman pound (340g/12oz), which was nearly enough to purchase a male slave.

Roman imports
The Romans imported huge quantities of raw materials, including luxury goods such as gold and ivory and cheaper goods such as food.

Roman exports
The Romans paid for their imports with precious metal and coins, and exported products such as wine and glassware.

World trade
Trade routes c.1 CE criss-crossed the whole of the classical world. The means of transport used depended on location – Bactrian camels were used in Central Asia, while horses, bullocks, and yaks were used elsewhere. Maritime trade was also extensive – there was an active trading network around the Indian Ocean.

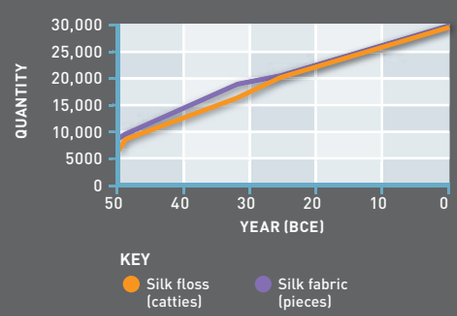
KEY
- Roman Empire and client states
- Han Empire

Trade routes
- Roman
- Trans–Saharan (rudimentary route)
- Indian Ocean
- Silk Route
- China
- East Africa
- Amber
- Incense
- Other (rudimentary route)

Goods traded
- gold
- silver
- tin
- tortoiseshell
- ivory
- animals
- horses
- grain
- spices
- timber
- wine
- olive oil
- amber
- precious stones
- silk
- clothing
- incense
- slaves

HAN TRADE

The establishment of Chinese control in Central Asia from the late 3rd century BCE opened up a series of routes through Persia to the Mediterranean, which became collectively known as the Silk Route. However, it also involved the Han emperors in continuous and costly defence of their new territories.

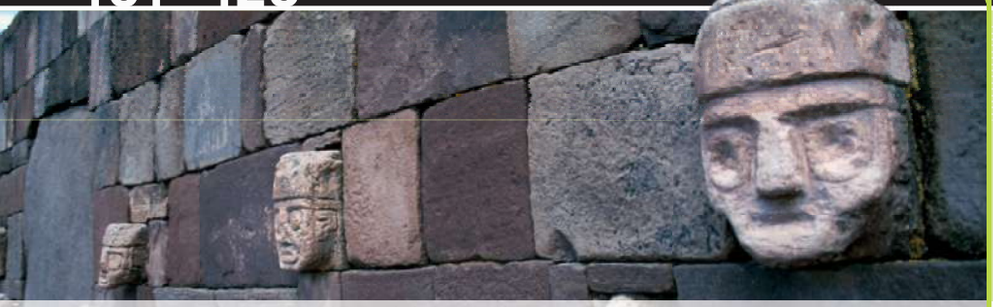


Buying safety
To guarantee security on their frontiers and along trade routes, the Han were forced to pay large bribes in silk to barbarian groups such as the Hsiung-nu.

Han imports
The Han valued spices as much as the Romans did, but they also sent trade expeditions to Ferghana in Central Asia in search of what they called "heavenly horses".

Han exports
Knowledge of silk in China goes back to at least 2600 BCE, but under the Han it became a staple export item, alongside lacquerware.

401–423



Around 200 stone heads decorated Tiwanaku's Semi-subterranean temple. They may represent the group that founded the city – their flat head-dresses denote high status.

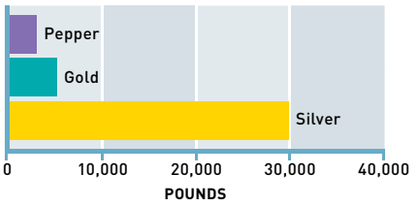
ALTHOUGH THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE SEEMED RELATIVELY SECURE IN 400, within a decade it had suffered a series of disasters. Gothic raids in 401 and again in 405 ravaged northern Italy. Then on the last day of 406, **hordes of Vandals**, joined by two other barbarian groups, the **Alans** and **Sueves**, crossed the frozen Rhine near Mainz, sacked Treveri (modern Trier, Germany) and Remi (modern Reims, France), and forced their way southwest until they reached the Pyrenees.

Meanwhile, the **armies of Britain** had raised up **a series of usurpers** as emperor from 406. The last of these, **Constantine III** (r.407–11), took most of the remaining Roman troops in Britain and **crossed to Gaul** in spring 407, aiming to seize the throne from the then head of the Western Roman Empire, Honorius. Although he was defeated and captured at Arles in 412, native leaders in Britain had already **expelled the last Roman officials** there in 410 – probably in revenge for their abandonment by Constantine's legion. **Britain** was now **independent from Rome**.

In 408, **Alaric** (r.c.395–410), leader of the **Visigoths**, **invaded Italy** once more. The Roman commander Stilicho persuaded the Senate to **agree to pay Alaric a huge bribe** in exchange for leaving the city, but there seems to have been a coup d'état and Stilicho was overthrown and killed. In 409, Alaric had Attalus, the prefect of Rome, declared emperor in an attempt to seize the initiative, but all negotiations failed. So, on 24 August 410 the **Visigoths entered Rome** and subjected it to a **three-day sack**. The event shook the entire Roman world, but Alaric was unable to secure domination over Italy, as he died later the same year.

In South America, **the city of Tiwanaku**, 25 km (15 miles) south of Lake Titicaca (on the border between modern Peru and Bolivia), **reached its greatest size** in the 5th century, covering an area some 8 sq km (3 sq miles) in extent. Its central area contained a lavish series of **ceremonial buildings and temples**. These included the Semi-subterranean Temple, decorated with stone heads of humans and supernatural beings, and structures such as the massive and beautifully decorated **Gateway of the Sun**. These were erected by a major pre-Columbian culture that **dominated the Altiplano** (flat high plateau) of Peru and Bolivia, and whose influence extended into northern Bolivia.

Visigoths ride on Rome
Alaric's sack of Rome in 410 was particularly shocking, as it was the first time the city had fallen since the Gauls took it in 390 BCE.



Ransom demands
Alaric initially asked for a huge ransom in return for leaving Rome in 410. Even when he moderated his demands, the Senate refused, and so the city was sacked.

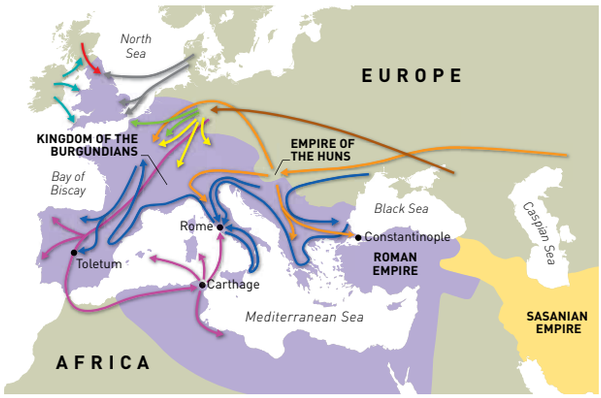
424–433

> "SO THE **VANDALS,** HAVING **WRESTED LIBYA FROM** THE **ROMANS** IN THIS WAY, MADE IT THEIR OWN..."

Procopius, Byzantine scholar, from *History of the Wars, III iv 1, c.*500–550

THE BARBARIANS WHO HAD INITIALLY CROSSED THE RHINE IN 401 had gone on to sack a number of cities before moving southwest into Aquitania and then crossing the Pyrenees into Spain, where they **occupied large swathes of Roman territory**. In 416–18, the Roman army commander Constantius persuaded the **Visigoths under Wallia** (r.415–18) to invade Spain. There he smashed the Alans and the Siling Vandals, but allowed some of them to settle in southern Spain and left the Asing Vandals and Sueves in possession of northwestern Spain. Wallia was rewarded with official possession of much of southwestern Spain.

On the other side of the Mediterranean in 429, **Boniface**, the Roman Governor of North Africa, revolted against his long-term adversary **Aëtius**, and called on the Siling Vandals for help. The **Vandal king, Gaiseric** (r.428–77), crossed over the Straits of Gibraltar with – it was said – 80,000 of his people and, far from helping Boniface, swiftly occupied most of North Africa. In 435, he made a treaty with the Romans, recognizing his **occupation of Mauretania** (modern Algeria and Morocco). Gaiseric broke this and in 439 his warriors **captured Carthage**, the Roman capital there, and set up an **independent Vandal kingdom**.



The barbarian invasions
Barbarian groups took more and more Roman territory in the first half of the 5th century, leaving the Western emperors virtually powerless.

KEY
- Roman Empire
- Sasanian Empire
- Huns
- Goths
- Alans
- Vandals, Alans, Sueves
- Burgundians
- Franks
- Jutes, Angles, Saxons
- Irish
- Picts

401 Visigoths under **Alaric** invade northern Italy

402 Stilicho pushes Visigoths out of Italy

404 St Jerome completes ***The Vulgate*** (Latin) translation of the Bible

406 Hordes of **Vandals, Alans, and Sueves** penetrate deep into Roman Empire

407 Usurper **Constantine III**, declared **emperor** by the army in Britain; crosses into Gaul

408 Constantine III extends his area of rule into **Spain**

409 Vandals, Alans, and Sueves cross into **Spain**; Alaric invades **Italy** again and besieges Rome

410 Alaric's **Goths** capture and **sack Rome**

411 Constantine III captured at Arles

c.411 Sueves establish **kingdom** in northwestern Iberia

415 Kumaragupta becomes ruler of the **Gupta Empire**

c.420 Moche culture in Peru builds Temple of the Sun, using 50 million bricks

420 Eastern Jin overthrown; **Lui Song dynasty** founded

422 Theodosius II, Eastern emperor, forced to agree **annual tribute** to the Huns

424 Aëtius invades Italy with Hunnish force intending to support the **usurper John**

425 John defeated; **Valentinian III** becomes emperor in the West

429 Vandals cross Strait of Gibraltar into North Africa

429–31 Struggle between **Boniface** and **Aëtius** for supremacy at Roman court ends in Boniface's death

428 Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, **preaches new doctrine** distinguishing Christ's human and divine nature; it is condemned as heretical

429 Bishop Germanus visits Britain on mission to root out Pelagianism

c.431 Pope Celestine sends **mission to Ireland** under Palladius

433 Attila becomes **king of the Huns**

A colourful Buddhist mural from the Yungang caves, which were begun under the Northern Wei *c.*450.

THE EASTERN JIN DYNASTY IN CHINA HAD ENDED IN 420, with Gongi's abdication. His successor, Song Wudi (r.420–22), a former fisherman, had risen to become a general and **founded the Liu Song dynasty**. He strengthened the southern kingdom's northern borders against the barbarian tribes, but under his son Wendi (r.424–53), the northerners captured Luoyang in 424, before, some 25 years later **besieging** the Liu Song capital of **Nanking**. Although Song Wudi had strengthened the central bureaucracy, the growing power and wealth of the **Buddhist and Daoist monasteries** weakened the economic basis of the state. Wendi's successors were weak and by 479 the Liu Song were overthrown by the short-lived **Qi dynasty** (479–502).

Meanwhile, in northern China the **Sixteen Kingdoms** had been united under the Toba Wei (a group of Turkic nomads), who founded the **Northern Wei dynasty** (386–534). The Northern Wei ruled over northern China, until its split into two in the early 6th century following a revolt against the imposition of Chinese dress and language on the Wei nomads.

In Europe, the Western Roman Empire continued to lose ground, as barbarians occupied more and more of its territory. In the 420s the **Visigoths under Theoderic** (r.418–51) occupied sections of the Mediterranean shore of Gaul, before they were pushed back southwest in 430. About this time a new group of barbarians, **the Huns**, began to menace the empire. This nomadic group from Central Asia, whose pressure from the rear on the Goths had been indirectly responsible for the crisis of 378 in the Balkans, had since moved further west. In 424, the Roman general **Aëtius recruited a force of Huns** to help him bolster the cause of John, a usurper raised up at Rome after the death of Honorius in 423. Aëtius continued to use the Huns into the late 420s to secure his power base and his appointment as patrician (the most senior post in the late Roman Empire) in 429. **In 435**, he was able to call on them to aid an **attack on the Burgundians** who had raided across the lower Rhine; these were soundly defeated and thereafter confined to a region to the northwest of Italy.

These were all just temporary successes, however, as the **area controlled** by the Western Roman emperors **was diminishing steadily**. The loss of almost all North Africa to the Vandals in 429–39 (and of Sicily in 440), of northern Gaul to the Franks by 450, of southwest Gaul to the Visigoths after 418, and of all save a few isolated outposts in Spain by the 430s meant the remaining strongholds in Italy and southeastern Gaul **could not provide enough tax revenue** to support armies to reconquer the lost provinces. The long reign of **Valentinian III** (r.425–55) in the Western Roman Empire **did not provide any stability** as he ascended to the throne as a child and never asserted himself until the very end, when he had **Aëtius**, the Western Empire's last effective general, **murdered**.

The **barbarians** who settled on the former Roman territories began gradually to **establish kingdoms of their own**, notably the Franks in northern Gaul and the Visigoths in southwest Gaul and Spain. In **Britain**, the situation **was rather different**, since the province had rebelled against Rome rather than being subject to barbarian conquest. In a bygone era, the Roman army might have been expected to reassert its control there, but, with the empire increasingly dependent on barbarian troops fighting under their own commanders, there was virtually no army left to retake it. The Britons were left to their own devices. It seems that some Roman institutions survived for a while; in 429 Bishop Germanus of Auxerre visited the island and found men bearing Roman titles. But **barbarian raiders** – attracted by the weakness of the British defences and the lack of a central political authority to counter them – **came in increasing numbers**. Around 446, the leading men of Britain addressed a desperate letter to Aëtius, appealing for aid. No reply was sent to these "groans of the Britons", and within a few years the **Angle, Saxon, and Jutish raiders** began to occupy parts of the former Roman province.

> **"THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY… LOSING ITS GRIP, THE WORLD IS SHORT OF BREATH."**
>
> **St Augustine of Hippo, theologian and philosopher**, from *Sermons 81, 8*

Northern Wei horse
The art of the Northern Wei often evoked their nomadic origins, as in this beautiful terracotta horse.

FLAVIUS AËTIUS
(*c.*395–454)

Born of nobility in Moesia (modern Bulgaria), Aëtius spent time from 408 in the royal court of the Huns. He used these contacts to gain influence and rose to further prominence in the late 420s. The deaths of patricians Felix (in 430) and Boniface (in 433) left him with unrivalled dominance. He shored up the empire's position, and in 451 he scored a notable victory against Attila the Hun. In 454 he was murdered by Valentinian III himself.

434 Huns **defeat army of Theodosius II** in Thrace

436 Burgundians defeated by Huns fighting in Roman service

438 Publication of **Theodosian Code**, an attempt to reconcile confusion of conflicting laws in Roman Empire

439 Vandals **capture Carthage**, completing conquest of Roman North Africa

440 Centre of Buddhist studies founded on Ganges plain at Nalanda

440 Vandal king, **Gaiseric**, invades Sicily

442 Gaiseric signs treaty with Valentinian III acknowledging his rule over North Africa

444 Daoism made official region of Northern Wei

446 Buddhist **rebellion** against Northern Wei **Daoist reforms**

***c.*445 Saxons** begin to settle in southern England

446 Burgundians granted imperial land in Geneva area

447 Huns under Attila **invade Thrace** and extract heavy tribute from the Empire

449 Vortigern, a British ruler, said to have **invited two Saxon leaders**, Hengist and Horsa to settle in Kent

449 Council of Ephesus **accepts Monophysitism**, the doctrine that Christ has a single, divine nature

450 Death of **Cui Hao** (b.381), main architect of **Northern Wei** administrative reforms

***c.*450 Influence of Teotihuacán** stretches as far as Guatemala

***c.*450 Franks** occupy land in Netherlands up to the Somme

***c.*450 Nazca people** from Peru draw great petroglyph pictures in desert

450 Theodosius II dies; **Marcian** succeeds him as Eastern Emperor

In this undated painting Attila the Hun is shown with his army – he is said to have been turned aside from sacking Rome only by the pleas of Pope Leo I.

“[HUNS] TOOK CAPTIVE THE CHURCHES AND SLEW THE MONKS AND MAIDENS.”

Callinicus, disciple of Hypatius, from *Life of Saint Hypatius, c.*450

IN JAPAN, THE 5TH CENTURY SAW THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT and expansion of the **Yamato state**. Complex irrigation systems began to appear, and rulers built ever larger burial mounds, such as the 486m (1,600ft) long Nintoku mound. **Ojin** founded a new line of kings, who exercised firmer control over Japan's main islands from a royal centre in the Kawachi-Izumi area. Yamato overseas contacts became more extensive, with ten diplomatic missions visiting China between 421 and 478, and increasing Yamato interference in civil wars between the Korean states of Paekche, Silla, and Koguryo.

The **Sasanian Persian Empire** came under pressure from eastern nomadic groups in the later 5th century. The **Hephthalite Huns** moved into Bactria early in the century, and were a particular threat to the Sasanians, but a famine during the **reign of Peroz (457–84)** caused them to move west again. In 469 Peroz suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Hephthalites. He was captured, and only released after leaving his son as a hostage. In 484, Peroz sought revenge in a new campaign against the Hephthalites, but was defeated and killed.

Having demanded, and been refused, the hand in marriage of Honoria, the sister of Roman Emperor Valentinian III in 450, the **Hunnish king Attila** (see 401–450) marched into Gaul. He was defeated near **Châlons** by an army of Romans under Aëtius and Goths under Theodoric.

Clay bear figurine
Clay haniwa *figurines have been a feature of rich Japanese burials since the earliest times. The large burial mounds of Yamato rulers contain huge quantities of them.*

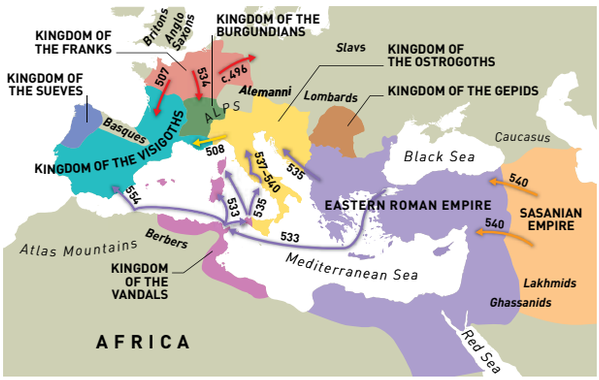
Undaunted, Attila invaded Italy in 452, but turned back short of Rome. **Attila died** after his wedding feast in 453, and his sons began a civil war that led to the Hunnish empire falling apart.

Following the death of the Roman general Aëtius in 454, real **power in the western Roman Empire** was exercised by a series of barbarian kingmakers, such as **Ricimer**, the leader of the Roman army in Italy. In 457, Ricimer placed **Majorian** on the imperial throne. When Majorian became too independent-minded, Ricimer replaced him with **Libius Severus** (r.461–65), who he later had poisoned. Deprived of effective leadership, the Roman Empire lost more of its Gallic territories to the **Visigoths** and **Franks**.

Pope Leo I
The illustration on this manuscript shows Pope Leo I, an Italian aristocrat, persuading Attila the Hun not to attack Rome.

The baptism of Clovis the first: Clovis's baptism made him an easier diplomatic partner for the eastern Roman Empire than his Arian neighbours.

IN 456, THE VISIGOTHS, encouraged by the western Roman emperor Avitus, had invaded the Iberian Peninsula. The Visigothic king **Theoderic II** (r.453–66) defeated the Suevic ruler **Rechiarius,** who was threatening the Roman province of Tarraconensis, and the remaining Sueves retreated. Theoderic took most of Spain for himself, but left the Romans parts of the east coast. This policy was reversed by his successor **Euric** (r.466–84), who overran the remaining Roman territories in the late 470s. By the time of **Alaric II** (r.484–507) the Visigothic kingdom encompassed almost all of Spain, as well as Aquitaine and Provence in southern Gaul. The situation in Spain was repeated elsewhere in the Roman Empire, and the area of imperial control shrank to little more than Italy. **Anthemius** (r.467–472) tried to recover some ground, but an expeditionary force against Vandal-controlled North Africa in 468 ended in disaster. In Gaul, Euric conquered almost all remaining Roman territory in the south by 475. In 472, Anthemius was overthrown by **Gundobad**, a Burgundian. Gundobad placed **Olybrius** (r.472) and **Glycerius** (r.473–74) on the throne in quick sucession, but, despairing of the empire's frailty, he then left for Burgundy. The last embers of the empire were contested in 475–76, between **Julius Nepos** and **Romulus Augustulus**, the son of **Orestes**, commander of the Roman army. Feeling that the



Barbarian kingdoms in Europe *c.*500
By 500, most of the former western Roman Empire was divided between several principal barbarian successor states: the Vandals in North Africa, the Visigoths in Spain and southern Gaul, and the Ostrogoths in Italy.

KEY
- Byzantine reconquests
- Frankish expansion
- Ostrogothic expanision
- Sasanian expansion

c.451 Kingdom of **Aksum** in North Africa is at the height of its power

451 Attila's Huns **invade Gaul** but are defeated by a Roman-Gothic coalition

452 Venice founded by refugees from Gothic attacks

452 Huns invade northern Italy, attacking Padua and Verona

453 Ostrogothic **attacks** on the **Balkans**

453 Death of **Attila** the Hun

454 Disintegration of the **Hunnish Empire**

455 Vandal king Gaiseric **sacks Rome**

455 Avitus becomes western Roman emperor

456 Avitus defeated at Placentia; Ricimer appoints **Majorian** emperor of Rome

456 Suevish king **Rechiarus defeated** by the Visigoths

461 Ricimer deposes and kills Majorian, appoints **Libius Severus** emperor

462 Vandals take **Sardinia**

467 Gupta empire begins to **collapse**

468 Vandals conquer **Sicily**

472 Zeno becomes eastern **Roman emperor**

473 Julius Nepos proclaims himself western **emperor**

475 Julius Nepos acknowledges rule of Euric, **king of the Visigoths**, in Spain

476 Last Roman emperor in the west deposed

476 Keyhole tomb of **Emperor Nintoku** (d.421) completed

476 Vandal king **Euric conquers** remaining Roman territory in southern Gaul

477 Collapse of the **Liu Song** dynasty

477 Kasyapa comes to power in **Sri Lanka** (to 495)

interests of the Germanic barbarians in the army were being ignored, Orestes's deputy, **Odoacer**, revolted and deposed Romulus in September 476. He did not appoint a new emperor, claiming that he ruled Italy on behalf of the eastern emperor **Zeno** (r.474–91). This marked the end of the Roman Empire in the west after 500 years.

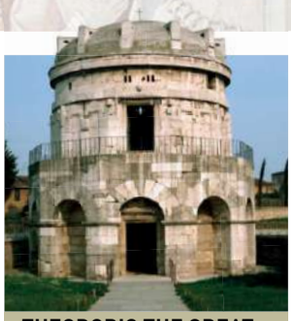
However, in the east the Roman Empire survived. The long reign of **Theodosius II** (408–50) had strengthened its position, and after 400 the eastern empire had not had to face such direct threats from Huns, Goths, Vandals, Alamanns, Burgundians, and Franks as the west. **Marcian** (r.450–57) had consolidated the eastern empire's finances, leaving a surplus of 100,000 pounds of gold at his death. **Leo I** (r.457–74) fended off residual Gothic threats to the Balkans, and even made an attempt to recover North Africa in 468. **Zeno** (474–91) faced the challenge of the new Germanic rulers of Italy, led by Odoacer. He resolved this by commissioning the king of the Ostrogoths, **Theodoric**, to topple Odoacer in 489. By 500, the eastern Roman Empire under **Anastasius** (r.492–518) was in little danger of the implosion that had erased its western counterpart just 25 years earlier.

The western Roman Empire was replaced by a series of **Germanic successor states**. Odoacer ruled as king of Italy, but the legitimacy of his rule was always questionable. In 489, an invasion by Theodoric's Ostrogoths led to a four-year stand-off, with Odoacer blockading himself inside the old imperial capital of Ravenna. After the murder of Odoacer in 493, Theodoric established a regime in which the continuation of Roman administrative practices won the loyalty of the old Roman aristocracy. In 497, the eastern emperor **Anastasius I** recognized Theodoric's right to govern Italy, providing him with a secure base to consolidate his rule and extend it into Gaul.

In northwestern Gaul the Franks had emerged as a threat in the late 4th century, and by the 460s they were carving out a kingdom under **Childeric**. His successor **Clovis** (r.481–511) transformed that kingdom, defeating **Syagrius**, ruler of a Roman enclave around Soissons, and expanding along the Rhine at the expense of the Alamans in the 490s. In 507, he defeated the Visigoths at the **Battle of Vouillé** and drove them out of most of southwestern Gaul. In the late 490s or early 500s, **Clovis converted** to Catholic Christianity, setting him apart from other barbarian rulers who were mostly Arians (members of an alternative Christian church).

In **Britain**, the expulsion of Roman officials had been followed by a period in which petty kingdoms vied for power. These kingdoms were vulnerable to coastal raiders, and, late in the 5th century, groups of Germanic barbarians (**Angles, Saxons, and Jutes**) settled in Britain. The arrival of the Saxons has been dated to 449, when they were invited by the British king Vortigern. Seven years later, they revolted and set up a kingdom in Kent. **Aelle** founded a kingdom in **Sussex** around 477 and **Cerdic,** in **Wessex** (around modern Hampshire), by 495. A British victory at Mons Badonicus around 500 stemmed the Saxon tide, but the respite was short-lived.

Saxon brooch
Anglo-Saxon art in the 5th century valued abstract geometric patterns, as seen on this brooch.



THEODORIC THE GREAT
(454–526)

Son of Thiudmir, a king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric spent 11 years as a Roman hostage, to guarantee the good behaviour of his father. He returned home to become king of the Ostrogoths in 471, and for the next 17 years alternately allied with and attacked Roman territories in the Balkans. In 493, Theodoric became the first Ostrogothic king of Italy. His rule was generally pro-Roman, and he was buried in this Roman-style mausoleum.

477 Buddhism becomes state religion in **China**
477 Aelle founds the Saxon kingdom of **Sussex**
480 Gundobad becomes Burgundian king
480 Hephthalite Huns invade the **Gupta empire**
486 Clovis rules most of northern Gaul
489 Northern Wei rulers commission the Buddhist cave temple complex at Yungang
493 Theodoric becomes **king** of **Italy**
493 Northern Wei capital moves to Luoyang
496 Clovis converts to **Catholicism**
c.500 Large **agricultural villages** of up to 50 houses in southwest North America
c.500 Paracas culture flourishes in southern Peru

477 Huneric becomes **Vandal king** of North Africa
478 First **Shinto shrine** built in Japan
479 Qi dynasty assumes power in southern China
c.481 Clovis becomes **king** of the Franks
484 A **schism** splits the churches of Constantinople and Rome
484 Hephthalites kill Sasanian ruler **Peroz**; he is succeeded by **Balash**
489 Theodoric, ruler of the **Ostrogoths**, invades Italy
489 Nestorian Christians, persecuted by Zeno, move into the Persian empire
491 Armenian church becomes independent from Constantinople and Rome
495 Work commences on Buddhist cave complex at **Longmen**
c.500 Arrival of **Bantu** people in southern Africa
c.500 Hagha kings rule in Ghana, West Africa
c.500 Tiahuanaco culture emerges in Bolivia
c.500 Expansion of **Huari** culture in central Andes

501–526

These 6th-century ivory panels show Emperor Anastasius. He amassed a vast financial surplus, which his successors spent on expanding the Eastern Roman Empire.

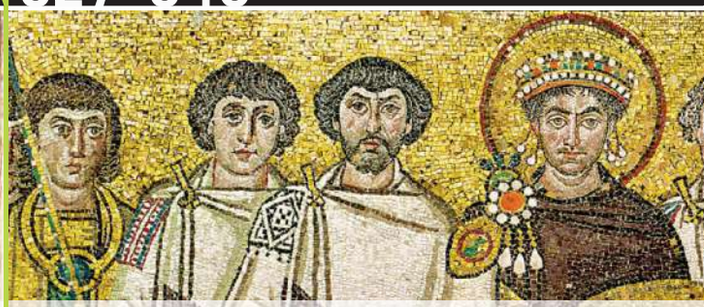
IN THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE (generally called the **Byzantine Empire** from about this date), **Anastasius** (r.491–518) faced difficulties in the Balkans, as new groups, including the **Bulgars**, pressed southwards across the Danube between 493 and 502. More serious were **problems on the eastern frontier**, where the **Persians** insisted on Byzantine financial subsidies to pay for the defence of strategic passes in the Caucasus against barbarian incursions. In 502, the **Persian ruler Kavadh** began a war over the issue; the slow Byzantine reaction allowed him to capture Amida as well as several towns in Armenia. Byzantine forces retook Amida in 505, and Kavadh – preoccupied with a Hepthalite invasion in the east – agreed a truce, which lasted until 527.

Anastasius was almost 60 when he **became emperor** in 491, and his place on the throne was only secured by his marriage in 492 to Ariadne, widow of his predecessor **Zeno**. Almost immediately Zeno's brother **Longinus** revolted, and it took six years for Anastasius to subdue Longinus's home area of **Isauria** (in western Asia Minor). Anastasius gained popularity by abolishing the **chrysargyron tax** for traders and craftsmen. Prosperity continued and over his reign his treasury amassed a surplus of 320,000 pounds of gold. He also implemented monetary reforms in 498 and 512 aimed at stabilizing the currency, which had suffered successive debasements in the 5th century. In religious terms Anastasius's reign was less tranquil, as he was a follower of **Monophysite Christianity**, which held that Christ had only a single divine nature and did not combine human and divine in his person. At first, Anastasius supported Zeno's **Henotikon** – an "act of union" issued in 482 that tried to broker a compromise between supporters of the orthodox creed (established at the Council of Chalcedon in 452) and the Monophysites. However, later his attitude became more pro-Monophysite, which led to serious rioting in 512, and the revolt of an army officer, Vitalian, in Thrace in 513. Anastasius left no clear heir, and on his death **Justin** (r.518–27), head of the palace guard, seized the throne. Justin was of humble origins and relied heavily on his nephew **Justinian**. He restored **Chalcedonian Christianity** and developed good relations with the **Ostrogoths** of Italy and the **Vandals** of North Africa. Abroad, his reign was generally peaceful, apart from a minor campaign against Persia in early 527.

Frankish fibula brooch
Fibula brooches were practical as well as decorative, being used to fasten clothes. This brooch is decorated with the heads of birds.

In Gaul, **Clovis, king of the Franks**, had defeated Syagrius, ruler of a Roman enclave near Soissons, in 486, followed by the Alamanns and the Thuringians in 491. The **Visigothic kingdom** in southwestern Gaul was his next target, and it collapsed after a major Frankish victory at Vouillé in 507. Clovis's marriage to Clotilde, daughter of the Burgundian king Chilperic, led him to convert to **Catholic Christianity** in the 490s, and he maintained cordial relations with the Byzantine emperor Anastasius, who gave him the title of consul *c*.508. Near the end of his reign, Clovis added several previously independent Frankish domains to his kingdom, notably that of the Ripuarian Franks. On his death in 511, Clovis's kingdom was divided among his four sons – Theuderic, Childebert, Chlodomir, and Chlothar. This tradition of subdivision would weaken the **Merovingian dynasty**, as the descendants of Clovis were known. The Merovingians ruled Francia (France) until the 8th century.

527–540



This 6th-century mosaic, from the curch of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy, depicts Emperor Justinian with his retinue of officials, guards, and clergy.

THE REIGN OF THE BYZANTINE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN (r.527–65) began with important reforms. In 528, he commissioned a new law code to replace the confusion he had inherited. The new code, the **Codex Justinianus**, came into force in 529 (revised in 534). An enthusiastic builder, Justinian ordered the building of the great church of **Hagia Sophia** in 534. The greatest challenge to his rule came in 532, when rioting among the Blue and Green chariot-racing factions got out of hand and turned into the **Nika Revolt**. The uprising almost caused Justinian to flee Constantinople, and its suppression killed 30,000 rebels.

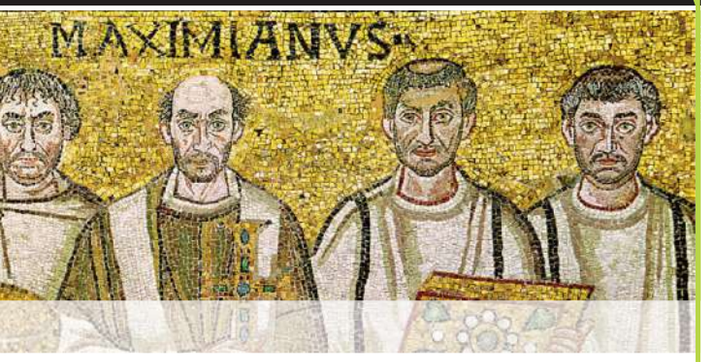
With his throne secure, Justinian looked abroad. In 533 he sent an army under **Belisarius** to Vandal-controlled North Africa, where **Gelimer** had deposed King Hilderic, a Byzantine ally. On 13 September, Belisarius defeated Gelimer's army at **Ad Decimum**, just outside Carthage, and Vandal resistance collapsed. Carthage was occupied and Gelimer was sent as a captive to Constantinople.

The rapid conquest of the **Vandal kingdom** encouraged Justinian to intervene in Italy. An excuse was provided by the murder in April 535 of his friend **Amalasuintha**, the Ostrogothic queen. Belisarius launched a strike against Italy in 535, landing on Sicily with 7,000 troops. Sicily was secured by the end of 535, and Belisarius moved into southern Italy early in 536. He took Naples after a three-week siege, causing the Ostrogothic king, **Vitigis**, to retreat northwards. On 9 December 536, in a symbolic restoration of the empire's lost provinces, the **Byzantine army occupied Rome**. Rome was soon besieged by Goths. Belisarius finally took the Ostrogothic capital of **Ravenna** in 540. Suspicions that he planned to become emperor led to his recall, encouraging more Ostrogothic resistance.

THEODORA (*c*.500–548)

Theodora, who Justinian married in 525, had once been a prostitute and the mistress of Hecebolus, the governor of Libya Pentapolis. After the death of his adoptive mother, Empress Lucipina (who had opposed their relationship), Justinian had the law changed in 524 to allow him to marry Theodora. Theodora became a forceful empress, stiffening Justinian's resolve during the Nika revolt and acting as the protector of Monophysite Christians – she was one herself – during times of persecution.

c.501 Rise of **Mon state of Dvaravati** (in modern Thailand)
502 In China, **Xiao Yan** captures Nanjing from Qin rulers and founds **Liang dynasty**
502 Bulgars ravage **Thrace**
502 Persians invade Byzantine Empire, sacking **Amida** in **Mesopotamia**
506 **Peace** agreed between **Persia** and **Byzantine** Empire
507 Franks defeat Visigoths at **Battle of Vouillé** and drive them out of Aquitaine
508 Ostrogoths **occupy Provence**
511 Frankish king **Clovis dies** and Gaul is divided between his four sons
518 **Justin** becomes Roman emperor and ends 34-year schism with church at Rome
524 **Turkic invaders** attack China's northern Wei dynasty
525 Military revolts and nomadic attack **undermine Wei rule** in northern China
525 **Kingdom of Aksum** conquers the Yemen (which was Jewish) and reinstates Christianity
526 **Athalaric** succeeds Theodoric as king of Ostrogoths; his mother **Amalasuntha** is regent
527 **Justinian**, nephew of Justin, becomes **Byzantine ruler**
529 Issuing of **Justinian's Code**, reforming Roman law
529 **Platonic Academy** at Athens closed down by Justinian
529 Korean state of **Silla** expands at the expense of states in the southwest
530 Byzantine general **Belisarius** defeats Persians at Dara
531 **Khusrau I** becomes Sasanian ruler of Persia
531 Justinian tries to enlist **Aksum** as an ally in war against Persia
532 In Constantinople, **Nike Revolt** threatens to overthrow Justinian
532 **Peace treaty** between Khusrau I and Justinian



> THE **PLAGUE** FELL **UPON** THE WHOLE **WORLD... NOT A SINGLE MAN** IN THE **WHOLE ROMAN EMPIRE** COULD **ESCAPE...**

Procopius, Byzantine scholar, from *Secret History, c.*550

Justinian's reconquests
Vandal Italy fell to Justinian's armies in 533, but it was devastated by the 20-year war needed to take it. An attempted Byzantine reconquest of Spain foundered, capturing only a few coastal areas.

KEY
- Byzantine Empire, 527
- Justinian's reconquests
- Byzantine campaigns
- Battle

Persia entered a new period of greatness under **Khusrau I** (r.531–79), who came to the throne at a time when the Mazdakites – a populist religious movement – had caused serious social tensions. Khusrau **reformed the tax system** and established **a new army**, encouraging poorer nobles and their followers to serve by paying salaries. Khusrau **captured Antioch** in 540, forcing Justinian to pay 5,000 pounds of gold to regain it. He attacked again, in 544, but a siege of Edessa failed and so he made a truce. A further Byzantine–Persian war (546–51) resulted in a **50-year peace**.

> TO ME, AND TO MANY OTHERS, **THESE TWO SEEMED NOT** TO BE **HUMAN BEINGS, BUT** VERITABLE **DEMONS... VAMPIRES.**

Procopius, Byzantine scholar, on Justinian and Empress Theodora, from *Secret History, c.*550

THE LATTER PART OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN lacked the achievements of its first half. A serious outbreak of **plague** – probably bubonic plague – began in Egypt in 540 and caused widespread mortalities, robbing the empire of desperately needed manpower. **Tax revenues fell**, further weakening the administration, and **prices rose**, leading to the passing of laws in 544 to reduce inflation. Further outbreaks of plague occurred in the 6th and 7th centuries, sapping the vitality of the Byzantine Empire.

In Italy, the **Ostrogoths** made rapid advances after the departure of **Belisarius**. Their new king, **Totila**, secured the area north of the River Po, and in 542 took control of much of central Italy. Belisarius was recalled to retrieve the sitiation in 544, but Justinian starved him of resources and **Rome fell** in 546. Although the Byzantines retook Rome in 547, it fell once more to Totila in 550. Justinian sent two huge armies under **Artabanes** and **Narses** to finish off the Goths. Artabanes entered Ravenna in June 552, and in July Narses defeated Totila at the **Battle of Busta Gallorum** in the Apennines. Totila later died of his wounds. There was still some Ostrogoth resistance, but the war in Italy was effectively over.

Ostrogothic brooch
This gold and enamel brooch demonstrates the high level of workmanship in the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy. Its eagle imagery may indicate Roman influence.

533–34 Belisarius conquers the **Vandal kingdom** of North Africa
534 Burgundian kingdom absorbed by Franks
535 Wei dynasty splits into eastern and western halves
c.535 Nubia divided into three kingdoms: Nobatia, Alodia, and Mukuria
536 Belisarius takes **Rome**
537 Rome beseiged by **Ostrogoths**
538 Buddhism reaches Japan
c.540 Ethiopian monks **translate the Bible** into their own language
540 Byzantines capture **Ravenna**, the Ostrogothic capital
540 Bulgars reach walls of Constantinople
542 Outbreak of **plague** in Constantinople kills many thousands
543 Nubian kingdom of **Nobatia** converted to Christianity by Coptic missionaries
544 Viet kingdom of Vietnam established
546 Ostrogothic king **Totila captures Rome**, which falls again soon after to Belisarius
547 Rebellion of Berber tribes breaks out in North Africa, but is crushed by Byzantine army
548 Nanjing sacked as Hou Jing leads rebellion against **Liang dynasty**
550 Byzantine general Belisarius replaced by **Narses**; Rome falls again to Ostrogoths
c.550 Avar peoples begin to migrate westwards
c.550 Khmer state of **Chenla** throws off suzerainty of Funan
c.550 Nubian kingdom of **Alodia** converted to Coptic Christianity

551–567

The 13th-century Iona Abbey (pictured) was built on the site of the original monastery founded by St Columba when he arrived on Iona in 563.

MEROVINGIAN FRANCIA (FRANCE) HAD BEEN DIVIDED into separate kingdoms on the death of Clovis in 511 (see 501–526). Despite this, Frankish power continued to grow. By 558, **Chlothar I** (511–61), who ruled the area of Francia around Soissons, had absorbed the Rheims kingdom and the region around Paris after their rulers died. This left Chlothar as the **sole Merovingian ruler of Francia** for three years, until his death in 561. Francia was once again divided, with Charibert I receiving Paris, Guntram getting Orléans, Sigibert Rheims, and Chilperic Soissons. It was not until 613 that the Frankish kingdom was reunited under **Chlothar II** (r.613–29).

Ajanta cave art
The Ajanta caves, a Buddhist holy site in Maharashtra, India, experienced a second major phase of use during the 6th century.

Ireland had been converted to Christianity by **Patrick** (d.461) in the mid-5th century and a strong **monastic tradition** took hold there. From the 6th century, Irish monks began conducting missions abroad. In 563, **Columba** (*c*.520–97) set up the **abbey of Iona** on an island off Scotland's western coast. Iona became a centre of Irish-influenced monasticism, which extended into northern England, Scotland, and Francia with the foundation of the monastic centre at Luxeuil in 590.

The **Gupta Empire fell apart** after the reign of Vishnugupta (r.540–50); and northern India split into a number of **regional kingdoms**. A minor branch of the Guptas ruled Magadha, but they were swept aside by the Maukharis of Kanauj. The region fell to the Vardhana king **Harsha**, who established an empire in the early 7th century.

568–588

> **“** WHEN **JUSTIN** HAD HEARD THESE EVENTS… HE HAD **NO HEALTHY** OR **SANE THOUGHTS…** HE **FELL INTO** A **MENTAL DISORDER** AND **MADNESS** AND AFTERWARDS HAD **NO UNDERSTANDING OF EVENTS.** **”**

Evagrius Scholasticus, scholar and aide to Gregory of Antioch, on Justin II's reaction on the fall of Dara to the Persians, from *Ecclesiastical History c*.595

JAPAN'S SOGA FAMILY CAME TO PROMINENCE IN 540, when **Soga no Iname** was made chief minister. **Emperor Bidatsu's death** in 585 led to a succession dispute, from which Iname's grandson **Yomei** emerged successful. The next emperor, **Sushun** (r.586–93), had a Soga mother, reinforcing the family's dominance. When Sushun was assassinated in 593, he was succeeded by Bidatsu's widow **Suiko** (r.593–628), who was another Soga. Suiko's reign saw the start of the **Asuka Enlightenment**, and was a time of great confidence in foreign affairs, state support for Buddhism, and flourishing arts.

In 572, the Byzantine emperor **Justin II** (r.565–78) went to **war with Persia** after he refused to pay a tribute due under the terms of Justinian's 50-year peace deal (see 527–540). In 573, Persia struck back, invading Syria and taking the fortress of Dara. On hearing this, Justin went insane. His wife took power, and had to agree a humiliating peace with Persia.

7 THE NUMBER OF **YEARS** THE **“ENDLESS PEACE”** OF 532 **BETWEEN** THE **BYZANTINE EMPIRE** AND **PERSIA LASTED**

In 567, the **Lombards**, who had settled in the former Roman province of Pannonia (Hungary), destroyed the Gepids and then, under **Alboin** (reign *c*.560–72), moved southwest into Italy, where the Byzantine authorities were too weak to resist them. In 568–69 they **occupied the plain of the Po River** and set up dukes in major cities. By 572, when Pavia fell to them, they had founded duchies as far south as Benevento. Attempted **Byzantine counterattacks** in 575 were a disaster. Under **Agilulf** (r.590–616) the Lombard kingdom consolidated; the Byzantines were limited to small territories around Rome, Naples, and Ravenna.

Under **Khan Bayan** (r.*c*.562–82), the **Avars** – nomadic horsemen from the northern Caucasus – exploited the vacuum left by the departure of the Lombards to **carve out a vast territory** centred around modern Austria. Their conquest of a number of Byzantine towns prompted **Emperor Maurice** (r.582–602) into a successful campaign to dislodge them.

552 Gao Yang deposes China's last Eastern Wei emperor, starting the **Northern Qi dynasty**

554 Korean state of **Paekche** allies with Japan against **Silla**, its Korean rival

555 Byzantines complete their **reconquest of Italy**

557 Yu Wenjue deposes China's Western Wei ruler, founding the **Northern Zhou dynasty**

558 Chlothar I becomes sole ruler of Francia

562 50-year peace signed between Byzantine emperor **Justinian** and **Chosroes I** of Persia

563 Irish missionary **Columba** begins evangelizing Scotland

565 Justin II becomes Byzantine emperor

568 Lombards move south from the Danube and **invade Italy**

569 Nubian kingdom of Makuria converts to Christianity

c.570 Sef ibn Dhi Yazan founds the Bornu kingdom of **Kanem** in Central Africa

c.570 Birth of the **Prophet Muhammad** in Mecca

570 Persians expel the **Askumites** from Yemen

573 Frankish kingdom riven by civil war

574 Emperor Justin II goes insane and is replaced by **Tiberius II**

577 In China, the Northern Zhou are overthrown by Yang Jian, who founds the **Sui dynasty**

577 Saxons win Battle of Dyrrham, completing the conquest of most of southern England

582 Byzantine emperor Tiberius II **surrenders Sirmium** (in modern Serbia) to the Avars and pays them tribute

c.580 Avars establish a state on the Hungarian plain

585 Construction of **new defensive walls** in the north of China

Painted *c*.581–618, this fresco is from China's Dunhuang caves, in a strategic Silk Road oasis. The caves contain some of the finest examples of Buddhist art.

IN 581, YIANG JIAN, A GENERAL OF THE ZHOU RULERS of northern China, rebelled and took the throne for himself as the emperor **Wendi** (r.581–604). In 589, he invaded southern China. His forces rapidly overcame those of the last Chen emperor, **Hou Zhu**. Wendi was now the country's sole ruler and the first emperor of the **Sui dynasty**; after three centuries of division, **China** was finally **united**. Wendi disarmed private armies and established agricultural colonies along China's frontiers to strengthen central control in remote areas. He implemented a **major land reform** that increased the number of households liable to the land tax from 4 million in 589, to almost 9 million in 606. Wendi also extended the country's canal system to form a "**Grand Canal**" that allowed vessels to travel 2,000km (1,240 miles) from Hangzhuo in the southeast to the northeastern provinces around Beijing, via Luoyang in eastern central China. Austere, strict, and occasionally violent, Wendi seemed to have set the Sui dynasty on firm foundations; in the end, it lasted only 14 years after his death, when it was replaced by the Tang.

In 582, **Emperor Maurice** succeeded **Tiberius II** (r.578–82) as the Byzantine emperor. He had been commander of the palace guard and then of the war against the Persians from 578. Tiberius's overspending and ineffective campaigns against the Persians, Lombards, and Avars had **emptied the imperial treasury**, leaving Maurice facing an immediate financial crisis. His subsequent economizing led to **mutinies** by the eastern army in 588 and by that of the Balkans in 593. Maurice made his father Paul head of the Senate and his brother-in-law **Philippicus** head of the palace guard; such nepotism further increased his unpopularity.

In 584, Maurice **renewed the war with Persia**, appointing Philippicus to oversee it. The new commander attacked Arzanene, but his campaign was disrupted by the **defection** of **the Ghassanid Arabs** – former allies alienated by the arrest of their king, al-Mundhir. The mutiny of the eastern troops in 588 caused Byzantine efforts to stall further, and in 589 they lost the city of **Martyropolis** (in present-day Turkey) to the Persians. The Byzantines were saved by the outbreak of a civil war in Persia; the involvement of a Byzantine army in the restoration of one Persian claimant, **Chosroes II**, led to the recovery of Martyropolis and Dara in 592.

In the Balkans, the **Slavs** – a non-Germanic people referred to as "Sclaveni" in contemporary sources – seem to have arrived north of the Danube in the early to mid-6th century. When the Avars moved into the region in *c*.559 the Slavs were pushed further south. By the end of the 6th century, Slavic groups had settled as far south as northern Greece, the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic, and Macedonia, as well as in those areas of Bulgaria, Bohemia, Moravia, Serbia, and Croatia where the great Slav kingdoms of the Middle Ages would later arise.

In 596, **Pope Gregory I** sent a mission to Britain to revive Christianity, following the invasions by **pagan Anglo-Saxons** in the 5th and early 6th centuries. The missionaries set out under **Augustine**, a former prior of a monastery in Rome, and arrived in Kent the following year. Their reception was reasonably warm as Bertha, the wife of the **Kentish king Aethelberht**, was already Christian. After Aethelberht was baptized a Christian, Augustine was able to establish a church in Canterbury. **King Saebert of Essex** and **King Sigebert of East Anglia** – both dependent on Kent – also converted, but the infant English Church would suffer a series of setbacks before the last Anglo-Saxon kingdoms became Christian in the late 7th century.

> "NOT **ANGLES,** BUT **ANGELS.**"
>
> **Pope Gregory I,** on seeing Anglo-Saxon slaves at a market in Rome

POPE GREGORY I (590–604)

From 572 to 574 Gregory I was prefect of Rome, and only became a monk on his father's death. A man of great ability and energy, he was involved in resistance to the Lombards in Italy in the early part of his papacy, but he maintained good relations with the Merovingians in Francia and the Visigothic rulers of Spain. Relations with the Byzantine emperor Maurice broke down over the use of the title "ecumenical patriarch" by the Bishop of Constantinople, which Gregory viewed as a challenge to his authority.

Sui dynasty figurine
This figure depicting a trader on a camel emphasizes China's continuing concern with commerce along the Silk Road through Central Asia.

589 **Visigothic king Recared** announces conversion of the country to **Catholicism** at Council of Toledo

589 The western Turks based in Dzungaria, control the **Silk Road**

589 **Chosroes II** deposed as Persian ruler by a military uprising under Bahram; he flees to Constantinople

589 **Yang Jian** captures the Yan capital, **reuniting China**

589 Byzantines lose city of **Martyropolis** to the Persians (retaken in 592)

589 **Land reform** implemented by Sui emperor Wendi in China

590 **Slavs** begin to move into the **Balkans**

590 **Gregory I** ("the Great") becomes pope

591 **Byzantines restore Chosroes II** to the Persian throne

592 Emperor Maurice launches **Byzantine counterattack** against the Slavs in the Balkans

592 Civil war breaks out in China between the pro-Buddhist **Soga** and anti-Buddhist **Mononobe** clans

593 **Mutiny** of Byzantine army in the Balkans

595 Indian mathematicians use the **decimal system**

597 **St Augustine** begins mission to convert England to Christianity

598 Byzantines agree treaty with the Lombards, **conceding northern Italy** to them

4

TRADE AND INVENTION

600–1449

In the Medieval period, trade and travel unified the Old World in a single network, with new ideas and inventions emerging even as the political landscape was transformed. Meanwhile, in the New World, great civilizations reached their peak.

600–610

A coin depicting the Eastern Roman emperor Heraclius.

UPHEAVAL IN THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE began when the emperor Maurice (r.582–602) dispatched his armies to the northern Balkans to regain imperial control of the Danube frontier from the Avars (see 568–88). In 602, the army rebelled under officer Phocas and Maurice was killed. **Phocas became emperor** but **Chosroes II** of Sasanian Persia **took advantage** of the eastern empire's weakness, while the Avars invaded from the north. In 610 the son of the military governor of Roman Africa, **Heraclius**, executed Phocas and declared himself emperor.

In 606, in northern India, Harsha (c.590–647) acceded to the thrones of Thanesar and Kannauj, establishing the **last native Indian empire** of ancient times.

> THE **EMPEROR HARSHA,** NOBLE IN **BIRTH** AND OF WELL-CHOSEN **NAME,** THE SURPASSER OF **ALL THE VICTORIES WON** BY ALL THE KINGS OF ANCIENT TIMES...

Banabhatta, Indian poet, from *The Deeds of Harsha, c.*640

611–620

A Tang dynasty Mendicant friar, with an unusual travelling companion.

Tang dynasty horse sculpture
Horses were symbols of military prowess, especially warhorses from the western fringes of the empire.

SASANIAN CONQUESTS RESTORED THE PERSIAN EMPIRE at the expense of the **Byzantines** with the falls of Jerusalem in 614 and Egypt in 619. By 618, Constantinople was besieged by the Avars, and their Slavic subjects. In 620, Heraclius bought off the Avars in order to focus on repelling the Persians.

In 613 **Clothar II** (584-629) **reunited the Frankish kingdom**, bringing an end to civil war. His Edict of Paris, issued in 614, introduced reforms to the Merovingian church and state.

In 616–17, rebellions against the despotic rule of Yangdi (r.604-17) caused the collapse of the Sui dynasty in China. A year later military governor **Li Yuan founded the Tang dynasty**, which ruled until 906.

621–630

This 1721 engraving by Austrian architect Johann Fischer von Erlach shows Al-Haram Mosque and Ka'aba in Mecca.

MUHAMMAD FIRST RECEIVED A DIVINE REVELATION IN 610 and began to preach in Mecca from 613; but the start of the Islamic era is traditionally marked by the Hegira or *hijra*, the **flight to Medina**. Hostility from the Meccan authorities forced Muhammad to flee to Medina with his family and followers in 622. In Medina, Muhammad established a political and religious power base. He fought a series of attacks by Meccan forces, with their ultimate surrender in 630 when he took possession of the Ka'aba, the holiest shrine in the Arabian Peninsula. Muhammad's rule was then unchallenged.

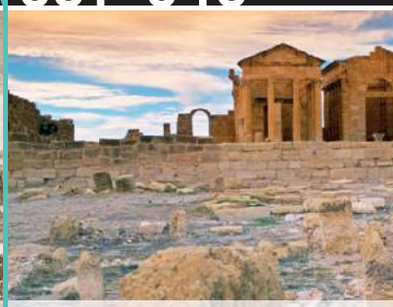
Heraclius began to claw back territory ceded to the Persians, starting at the Battle of Issus in 622 and later, in 627, at the Battle of Nineveh. In 628 the **Sasanian and Byzantine Empires** made peace, exhausted by decades of war and unaware of the storm brewing to the south.

In China the emperor's son, **Taizong, consolidated Tang power** by suppressing rebellions across the empire. In 626, Taizong forced his father to step down and inaugurated a golden age of trade, prosperity, and cultural exchange.

MUHAMMAD (570–632)

Born in Mecca, Muhammad ibn Abdallah worked as a merchant and shepherd before growing discontented and retiring to a life of contemplation. In 610, he received the first of a series of divine revelations – these became the Qu'ran. He preached a monotheistic faith based on complete submission to God (Islam). Before his death he unified Arabian tribes within his new religion.

631–640



The ruins of the 7th century Byzantine fortresses at Sbeitla, Tunisia.

BY THE TIME OF MUHAMMAD'S DEATH IN 632, the young Muslim community – united by Islam, which transcended traditional rivalries – was ready for expansion. Although Muhammad had left no guidance as to his successor (caliph), four men tied to the prophet by marriage emerged as the Rashidun, or "rightly guided", caliphs. **The first caliph, Abu Bakr** (r. 632–34), suppressed an Arabian rebellion, re-established Islamic dominion over Arabia, and began the conquest of Syria. His successor **Umar** (r.634–44) **became caliph** in 634 and oversaw the conquest of **Syria** and the defeat of the Byzantines at Ajnadayn. By 637, Umar controlled Jerusalem and Damascus, and, in the same year, Arab forces conquered **Persia** (modern Iran and Iraq), occupying the Sasanian capital at Ctesiphon. **Umar established several important practices**: the creation of garrison towns in conquered territory to separate the invading Arabic forces from the locals; the recruitment of soldiers through slavery and tribal

> THOSE WHO ARE **PATIENT IN ADVERSITY** AND FORGIVE WRONGS ARE THE DOERS OF EXCELLENCE.

Prophet Muhammad

602 Eastern Roman emperor **Maurice** killed; **Phocas** succeeds him

602 Emperor Yangdi orders construction of Grand Canal; completed 610

606 Harsha begins conquest of northern **India**

610 Heraclius becomes Eastern Roman Emperor

613 Muhammad starts preaching in Mecca

613 Clothar II reunites **Frankish** kingdom

618 Sui Emperor Yangdi murdered; **Tang dynasty** established

619 Persians **conquer Egypt**

622 Battle of Issus, first in a string of **victories for Heraclius** over Persians

624 Northern **China subdued** by Tang

626 Tang Emperor overthrown by his son, **Taizong**

628 Sasanian king Chosroes II "the victorious" deposed and slain by his son

629 Dagobert succeeds Clothar II as king of all the franks

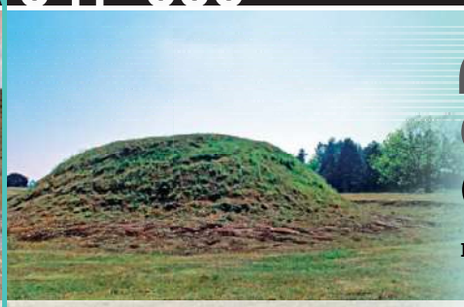
630 Heraclius reaches zenith of his power and fame by marching triumphantly into Jerusalem

630 Xuanxang reaches India on his epic journey to the west

632 Death of the prophet **Muhammad**; start of caliphate

634 Death of **caliph Abu Bakr**; **Umar** becomes second caliph

635 Nestorian Christians reach China



“THEY BEQUEATHED THE GLEAMING GOLD, TREASURE OF MEN, TO EARTH”

From the Old English epic poem, *Beowulf*

One of 20 burial mounds of this type at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, England, which conceal the graves and funerary treasures of the royal line of East Anglia.

KEY
→ Xuanzang's route

The travels of Xuanzang
The young monk left the Tang capital, Chang'an, in around 630. He crossed Central Asia and reached India in 645.

affiliation – those recruited for fighting were made dependents of tribal members; and a taxation system that favoured Muslims and encouraged conversion but allowed Christians and Jews to follow their religions.

Buddhism became increasingly influential in Tang China; the Buddhist monk **Xuanzang** journeyed far and wide in search of wisdom. His travels became legendary and foresaw the increasing mobility of people and ideas along the **Silk Road**, made possible by the power of the Tang and later the caliphate. Also travelling the Silk Road, **Nestorian Christians** reached **China** from Persia in 635.

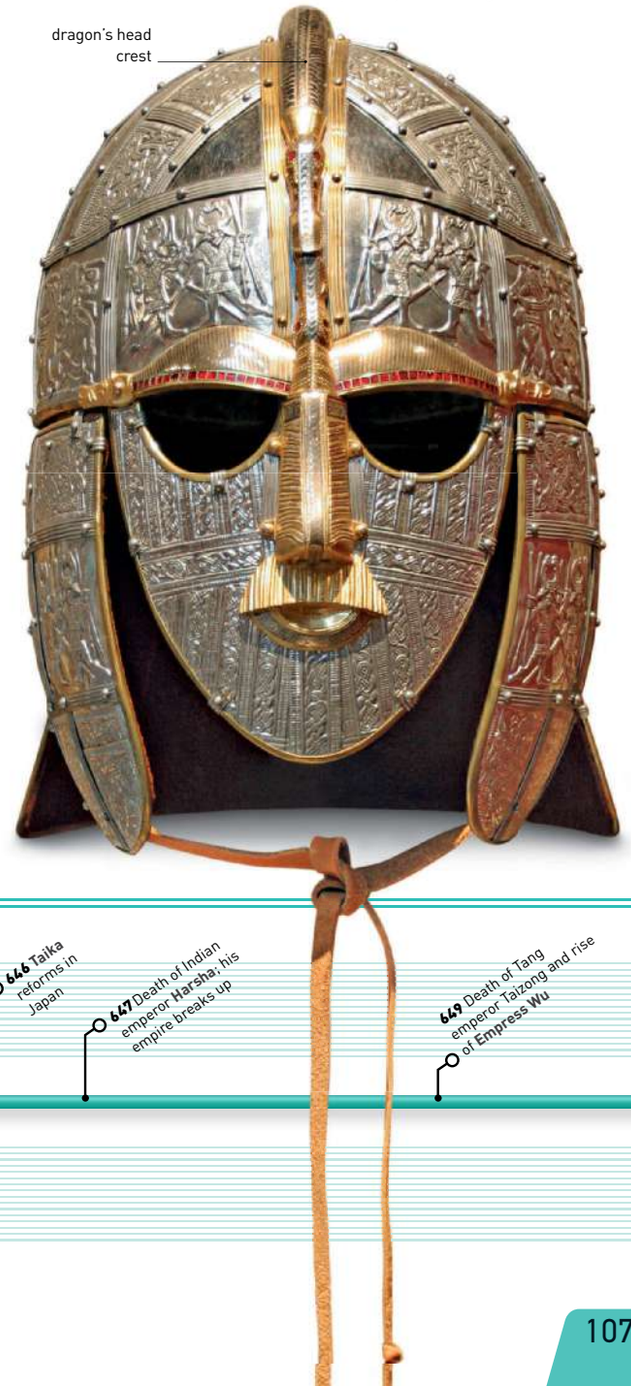
ISLAMIC EXPANSION CONTINUED as the Arabs defeated the Persian counterattack at the Battle of Nihavand in 642, **dealing the final blow to the Sasanian Empire**; the last emperor, Yazdgird III, died in 651, and with him died Zoroastrianism, the religion of the empire. Conversion of the population to **Islam** proceeded slowly but steadily over the following centuries. The Arabs met with similar success in Egypt where the Byzantines offered only token resistance. The **fall of Alexandria** came in 642, the same year that the Muslims founded the military settlement of Fustat, which later became Cairo. The following year the marauding Islamic armies conquered Tripolitania in North Africa as their advance continued,

27 METRES THE LENGTH OF THE SUTTON HOO SHIP

unchecked even by the assassination in 644 of Umar by a Persian slave. His successor, **Uthman**, promulgated the **first written version of the Qu'ran**, which had previously been transmitted orally.

After launching successful expeditions against the Tibetans and Mongolians, but failing to conquer Korea, the **Tang emperor Taizong** (r.626–49) **died** in 649, and his weak-willed son began to cede increasing influence to the **Empress Wu** (624–705). In Japan, the **Fujiwara** clan enacted the **Taika reforms** in 646, bringing all land into imperial ownership and centralizing power following the Chinese model.

In **England**, Christian converts battled pagan kings for control over territory and the religious and cultural direction of the region. In 642, for instance, the Christian king **Oswald of Northumbria**, hitherto one of the most powerful kingdoms, was slain by the pagan king **Penda of Mercia**. The great Anglo-Saxon ship burial at **Sutton Hoo**, Suffolk – filled with marvellously worked artefacts, weapons and treasures – is believed to have once contained the body of an **Anglo Saxon king**. One of the last burials of this type in England, the artefacts comprise a fusion of Christian and non-Christian elements, suggesting transition as **Christianity** gained in popularity and strength.



Sutton Hoo helmet
This reconstruction is made from iron with highly-decorated panels of tinned bronze.

637 Battle of Qadisiyya; Arab forces defeat Persians and conquer Persia as far north as Mosul

639 Death of Dagobert, last of the strong Merovingian kings

c.641 Sutton Hoo burial

641 Death of Heraclius

642 End of Sasanian Empire; Persians crushed at Battle of Nihavand

642 Death of Oswald of Northumbria

644 Caliph Umar assassinated; Uthman promulgates Qu'ran to be written down

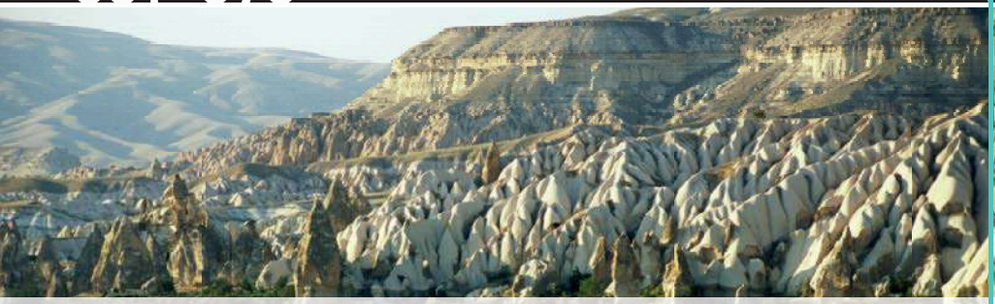
645 Xuanzang returns to China after pan Asia travels

646 Taika reforms in Japan

647 Death of Indian emperor Harsha; his empire breaks up

649 Death of Tang emperor Taizong and rise of Empress Wu

651–670



The weathered landscape of central Anatolia, a Byzantine territory that suffered repeated raids from Arab forces in the 7th century.

THE SPLIT BETWEEN SUNNI AND SHIITE MUSLIMS was the outcome of fierce disagreement over how succession to the caliphate ought to be decided; either by selection (as in the case of the first three caliphs) or by hereditary descent. Caliph Uthman (r. 644–56) had promoted members of his own clan, the **Umayyads**. He was assassinated in 656 by Egyptian soldiers, nursing grievances over their lower status. **Ali Ibn Abi Talib** became the **fourth caliph**. As Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law – next in line by descent – Ali enjoyed unique status in the Islamic world, but he faced many challenges. At the **Battle of the Camel** in 656 Ali overcame a revolt by the prophet's widow A'isha and her allies, opposing his inclusive policies. In 657, the Umayyad emir of Syria, **Mu'awiya**, asserted his claim on the caliphate; Ali was also challenged by the Kharijis, a sect who objected to the application of the hereditary principle. In 661, **Ali was murdered** by a Khariji, opening the way for **Mu'awiya to declare himself caliph**, instituting the Arab Umayyad dynasty. Ali's supporters formed a party of their own, which evolved into a distinctive branch of Islam, **the Shiites**, in opposition to the Sunni.

Emperor Constans II attempted to re-establish **Byzantine claims to Italy** by relocating his court to Rome in 663, but raids deep into Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) by Arab forces led to a collapse in his authority; in 668, he was assassinated and **Constantine IV** took the throne. **Arab incursions** into Anatolia continued and by 670 they had reached the Byzantine capital, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), launching the **first siege on the city**, which would last until 677.

The **Unified Silla kingdom** in Korea brought to an end the long Three Kingdoms period, with the help of **Tang China**. In 660 the Tang destroyed the kingdom of Paekche, while in 668 Silla and Tang forces combined to overcome Koguryo, thus bringing all of the Korean Peninsula under Silla control.

Expansion under the caliphate
The rapid Arab expansion continued throughout the latter half of the 7th century. Islamic armies pushed into Central Asia and North Africa, bringing them within striking distance of Spain.

KEY
- Muslim lands by 656
- Byzantine Empire *c.*610
- Sasanian Empire *c.*610
- Frankish Kingdoms *c.*610

Stoneware bird
This grey stoneware incense burner dates from the Silla kingdom, which was on the verge of becoming the dominant power during Korea's late Three Kingdoms period.

671–690

A modern-day depiction of the Battle of Karbala; al-Husayn's death is commemorated in the annual Shiite ritual of the ashura.

THE MAYA CITY-STATE OF TIKAL BEGAN ITS RESURGENCE after a century-long period of political and cultural domination by neighbouring city-states known as the Tikal hiatus, which had been marked by an absence of inscriptions in the city's petroglyphic record. An inscription dated to 672 records a military campaign against the **rival city-state of Dos Pilas**, and in the following decades Tikal restored its position among the Maya of the Late Classic period (600–900). The city's rulers engaged in a construction programme to match their political ambitions, **building many impressive structures** including massive pyramids, ball courts, causeways, observatories, and palaces.

The Arab forces besieging the city of Constantinople (see 670) were unable to breach its massive walls and were eventually beaten off with the use of a new **Byzantine secret weapon**– "Greek fire" (see 711–20). Its deployment may also have helped destroy the Arab fleet at the Battle of Syllaeum in 677, forcing **the caliphate to agree a 30-year truce**. The truce bought breathing space for the embattled Byzantine Empire, struggling to hold back the Bulgars, who established the **First Bulgarian Empire** in 681 on conquered Byzantine territory north of the Balkan mountains.

ARAB CONQUESTS

Having consolidated their conquests of Persia and Byzantine North Africa, Arab armies pressed on eastwards and westwards. In Central Asia, Arab forces crossed the Oxus river in 667 and continued to advance to within range of the Silk Road kingdom of Bukhara. In Africa, they crushed the Berber kingdoms, reaching Tangiers in 683.

651 Standardized version of **Qur'an** issued by caliph Uthman

651 Death of Yazdegird III signals **end of Sasanian Empire** and Zoroastrianism

654 Penda, King of the **Anglo-Saxon Kingdom** Mercia dies

655 Battle of Mast: Arabic navy destroys Byzantine fleet

656 Assassination of Uthman; **Ali becomes caliph** but the succession is disputed

657 Pacal becomes ruler of Maya city-state of **Palenque** and builds astronomical observatory

661 Sunni–Shiite split: Mu'awiya becomes fifth caliph of Islam

664 Synod of Whitby – English clergy adopt Roman over Celtic Christianity

664 Arabs conquer much of **Afghanistan**

668 Assassination of Byzantine emperor Constans II; **Constantine IV accedes**

668 Silla kingdom unifies Korea

670 First **Siege of Constantinople** (to 677)

672 Resurgence of Maya city-state of **Tikal**

673 First use of "**Greek fire**" by the Byzantines during siege of Constantinople

677 Battle of Syllaeum: Byzantine fleet destroys Arabs, securing a 30-year peace

c.680 Indian mathematicians develop base ten and what is later known as the Hindu-Arabic **decimal place-value system**

681 Byzantine Empire cedes lands to Bulgars, who establish **First Bulgarian Empire**

Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock – a shrine sacred to all three Abrahamic faiths – has an octagonal floorplan and a massive gold dome.

At the **Battle of Karbala** in 680 the **Shiite leader al-Husayn ibn Ali**, grandson of Muhammad, was surrounded by Umayyad troops, deprived of water for several days, and eventually killed. His death was proclaimed a **martyrdom** by the Shiites, who commemorate it to this day.

In China in 690, the **Empress Wu finally took the throne** in her own name – the only woman in Chinese history to do so – after decades of controlling it through her husband and sons. She even created her own dynasty, **Zhou**, which she headed until 705.

Temple at Tikal
Flanking Tikal's Great Plaza, the 38m (122ft) high Temple II was built during the construction boom of the Late Classic resurgence.

3,000

THE NUMBER OF **MAJOR STONE BUILDINGS** CONSTRUCTED IN TIKAL'S LATE CLASSIC PERIOD

ABD AL-MALIK HAD BECOME CALIPH IN 685, instituting important changes to the way the caliphate was ruled, centralizing government, insisting that all state business was conducted in Arabic, setting up the *barid* (a postal/intelligence gathering service), and issuing, around 697, new coinage: the *dinar* and *dirham*. He also commissioned a great shrine to be built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the **Dome of the Rock** (or Qubbat as-Sakhrah), completed in 692.

> **"I HAVE NOT SEEN THE EQUAL;** NEITHER HAVE I HEARD TELL OF ANYTHING… **THAT COULD RIVAL IN GRACE THIS DOME OF THE ROCK…"**
>
> **Mukaddasi, Arab geographer**, *c.*10th century

The harsh ten-year rule of the **Byzantine emperor Justinian II** had aroused widespread opposition and in 695 he was deposed and had his nose cut off by **Leontius**, who became emperor in his stead. However, in 698, the **loss of Carthage**, the last Byzantine stronghold in North Africa, to the Arabs led to another revolt and Leontius suffered the same fate as his predecessor.

The turn of the century was a time of change and unrest in the Americas. In North America, the spear was superceded by widespread **adoption of the bow and arrow**. In the Valley of Mexico around 700, the great **city-state of Teotihuacán**, which once housed over 100,000 people, **collapsed** bringing six centuries of growth and dominance to an end. Social, economic, and environmental factors were probably to blame.

Ancient Teotihuacán mask
This mask was probably tied to a figurine representing a god. The mask would have been decorated with inlays and ear ornaments.

683 Arabs reach Tangiers

690 **Empress Wu** takes Chinese throne, establishing **Zhou Dynasty** (to 705)

691 **Battle of Sebastopolis**: Arabs defeat Byzantine emperor **Justinian II** and take Armenia; Justinian massacres defecting Slavs in revenge

692 Dome of the Rock completed

695 Justinian II deposed by **Leontius** and has nose cut off

695 **King Jaguar Paw** of Maya city-state of Calakmul **captured** and **sacrificed** by forces of Tikal

697 Traditional date of semilegendary first doge of Venice, **Paolo Lucio Anafesto**

698 **Arabs conquer** and destroy **Carthage**, found Tunis; loss of Carthage causes Leontius to be deposed

c.700 Huare conquer **Moche** in Peru

c.700 Collapse of city of **Teotihuacán** in the Valley of Mexico

c.700 North American Indians adopt **bow and arrow**

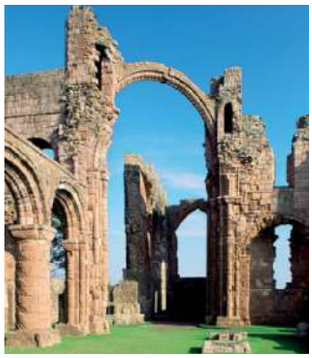
701–710

A detail from the illuminated manuscript of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.

ANGLO-SAXON ART FUSED GERMANIC AND CELTIC ELEMENTS, and, through travellers and Christian pilgrims, it also reflected Roman and Byzantine influences. A product of this unique synthesis was the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, an illuminated manuscript produced *c*.701 at the priory of Lindisfarne, on Holy Island, off the northeast coast of England.

In 705, with the help of Bulgar allies, the deposed emperor **Justinian II returned from exile** (see 690–700), regained the Byzantine throne, and exacted brutal revenge on those who had mutilated him.

By 705, **Zoroastrian refugees** fleeing the Islamic conquest of Persia **established communities in India** and became known as the Parsees. Persian Zoroastrian emigration continued during the following centuries.



Ruins of Lindisfarne Priory
The Benedictine Priory, built in the 12th century, replaced an earlier church founded by St Aidan in 635.

711–720

Greek fire being deployed, as illustrated in the *Madrid Skylitzes* manuscript from the 12th century, which chronicles the history of the Byzantine Empire.

His favourite concubine
This Tang dynasty scroll shows Xuanzong watching his concubine Yang Guifei mount a horse. The emperor's love for her inspired much drama and poetry.

IN 710, THE VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM OF SPAIN had descended into civil war, presenting a tempting prospect to the Islamic armies now established in North Africa, just a short distance away across the Straits of Gibraltar. In 711, a Muslim army under general **Tariq ibn Ziyad**, landed at Gibraltar. Tariq was a Berber (native of northwestern Africa), or, in the parlance of the times, a Moor, and it was a mixed army of Arabs and Moors that achieved the **conquest of Spain**, known to the Islamic world as **al-Andalus**. According to tradition, Tariq defeated the Visigothic king, Roderick, at the Battle of Guadalete, and by the end of the year most of the Iberian peninsula was under Islamic control. Only the northwest, known as **Asturias, managed to resist the invaders**, with defeat at the Battle of Covadonga in 718 checking the Arab advance. The year 718 is one of the dates traditionally given for the start of the process of Christian reconquest of Spain. Nonetheless, by the end of the decade further expeditions across the Pyrenees, and successful campaigns in Central Asia, had **extended caliphate control** from Provence to the borders of China.

The Arabs did experience some setbacks, however. In 717, yet another incursion into Byzantine lands triggered a change at the head of the empire, bringing **Leo III**, founder of the Isaurian Dynasty, to the throne. Although unable to prevent the Arabs from reaching the walls of the capital and launching the **second siege of Constantinople** (717–18), Leo's energetic command of the defence, and the deployment of the secret weapon **"Greek fire"**, halted Arab advances in the Eastern Mediterranean. Byzantine fleets, wielding Greek fire-spouting siphons, gained control of the seas, and Leo was able to begin restoring the empire.

In 713, the Tang **emperor Xuanzong** came to the throne. His 43-year reign would see **Tang China reach its apogee**, economically and culturally, with the establishment of many schools, patronage of the arts, and a great literary flowering.

GREEK FIRE

The Arab expansion indirectly proved the saviour of the Byzantine Empire, when Kallinikos, a Syrian Greek forced into exile by the Arab invasion, brought to Constantinople the recipe for a secret weapon that came to be known as Greek fire. Now believed to have been a concoction of naphtha, sulphur, quicklime, and nitre – a sort of medieval napalm – this highly flammable mixture was sprayed at enemies from a siphon device that could be fitted to the prow of a Byzantine war galley.

721–730

An iconic image of Christ held by Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople.

CASA GRANDE FLOURISHED AROUND THE 720s. The success of this settlement of the Hohokam, an ancient people of the Sonoran desert in modern-day Arizona, lay in a watering system that allowed a range of crops to be grown, despite the arid environment. The Hohokam lived here for more than a millennium; they were known as **"canal builders"** because of their sophisticated irrigation technology. Casa Grande was at the **centre of a trade network** that stretched from the **Pacific** coast to Tucson and to the **Gulf of Mexico**. The earliest structures at Casa Grande were probably pit houses; the "great house" that gives the site its name came much later.

In 725, the **Khazars**, a Turkic people of Central Asian origin, **established their capital at Atil**, on the Volga delta at the northwestern corner of the Caspian Sea. From here they **controlled trade routes to all corners of Asia** and built an empire that would control a huge swathe of Eastern Europe and Western Asia for centuries to come.

In Byzantium in 726, the emperor Leo III (see 711–20) instituted **a policy of iconoclasm** (smashing images deemed sacrilegious) in response to the idea that God was punishing Christian Byzantines by their loss of land to the Arabs and Slavs. The controversy encouraged the Roman papacy to assert their independence from Byzantine imperial authority.

c.701 Creation of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*

705 Parsees (Persian Zoroastrians fleeing Islamic expansion) **established in India**

705 Empress Wu deposed, dies

705 Justinian II returns from exile and massacres opponents

710 Islamic **conquest of Sind** (in Pakistan) under Mohammed ibn al-Kassim (to 715)

711 Islamic army under **Tariq ibn Ziyad** invades Spain

711 Justinian II killed by rebels

712 Liutprand, king of the **Lombards**, attempts unification of Italy; under his rule the Lombard kingdom reaches its height

713 Xuanzong becomes emperor in China

714 Charles Martel becomes ruler of the Frankish kingdom

716 Islamic forces take **Lisbon**

717–18 Second Siege of Constantinople: use of "Greek fire" halts Arab expansion in Eastern Mediterranean

720 Arabs occupy Provence; caliphate extends from Pyrenees to China

721 Arabs checked by duke Eudo at the Battle of Toulouse

725 *De Temporum Ratione*, a work by the English monk known as the **Venerable Bede**, popularizes the AD/BC **system of dating**

c.725 Hohokam settlement of **Casa Grande** in Arizona founded

726 Iconoclasm in Byzantium: the emperor Leo uses policy to oppose growth of monastic power

731–740

In 1837, artist Steuben depicted the Battle of Tours–Poitiers as a clash over the fate of Christian Europe. In reality Islamic raiders were beaten back in a minor skirmish.

741–750

The Great Mosque at Samarra, Iraq, built by the Abbasid Caliphate. Once the largest mosque in the world, the minaret stands at 52m (171ft) tall.

790
PEOPLE PER SQUARE KILOMETRE
THE POPULATION DENSITY OF **TIKAL**

SINCE CONQUERING SPAIN, ISLAMIC FORCES had made regular raids across the Pyrenees, striking deep into modern-day France before retreating to al-Andalus. In 721, an incursion into Aquitaine – a dukedom nominally in vassalage to the Frankish kingdom – had been checked by **Duke Eudo at the Battle of Toulouse**. But in 731, Eudo was unable to halt a fresh invasion of Islamic forces under **Abd al-Rahman I**, emir of al-Andalus. After defeat at the Battle of Arles, Eudo was forced to appeal to **Charles Martel**, the Frankish mayor of the palace, for help. Martel raised an army and met the Islamic forces on the banks of the Loire, between Tours and Poitiers, in 732. He was victorious at the **Battle of Tours–Poitiers**, and subsequent Christian historians would depict this as one of the defining clashes of the age – the moment at which Islamic expansion was checked and Europe preserved for Christianity. Arabic sources record it as a minor skirmish, and in reality its main significance was that it demonstrated the need for the Frankish kingdoms to present a unified defence.

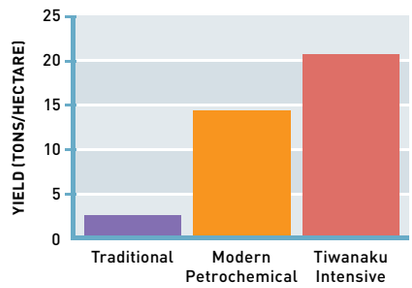
The **Maya city-states** of the Late Classic period reached the **peak of their power** and sophistication in the mid-8th century in Central America. The population of **Tikal**, for instance, swelled to at least 60,000, in a city spread out over 76 sq km (47 sq miles). Mayan rulers built stone temples, palaces, ballcourts, and observatories, and controlled a trade network stretching from California to South America. Yet the height of the city-states' glory sowed the **seeds of downfall**, as the populations overtaxed the surrounding ecology and exceeded their ability to cope with drought. Collapse was just around the corner.

Statue of Chaak, Mayan god
Mayans would have sought help from god of rain and thunder, Chaak, for their crops. Their civilization sat in a region of poor soil and fragile ecology, so rain was vital.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ABBASID CALIPHATE IN 750 was the culmination of growing tension in the Islamic world. Under the Umayyads (see 651–70) the Arab elite stubbornly maintained their special tax and political status, failing to deal with the growing grievances of the *mawali* (non-Arab Muslims). In 747, revolt broke out in Persian Khorasan, stronghold of the Abbasid clan, who traced their descent back to Muhammad through his uncle, al-Abbas. In 749, **Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah was proclaimed caliph** at Kufa in Iraq, and the following year at the **Battle of the Zab** he defeated Marwan II, the last Umayyad caliph. Marwan fled to Egypt but his head was sent back to Damascus, whereupon al-Saffah instigated a general **massacre of the Umayyad clan** to remove potential opposition.

In 741 **Charles Martel** (see 731–40) **died** and was succeeded by his sons **Pepin the Short** and **Carloman**. In 748, Pepin had a son, Charles, who would go on to unite most of Western Europe under one banner (see 761–90).

Tiwanaku, a pre-Columbian city on the altiplano (high plains) of Bolivia, reached it's height in around 750. Tiwanaku was the centre of a civilization that flourished from the third to tenth centuries (see 951–60). The city itself was probably a **ceremonial and trading centre**; its cultural and economic influence spread far through South America, and it would profoundly affect the development of later civilizations in the Andean region. Tiwanaku thrived in the harsh environment of the Bolivian altiplan thanks to its sophisticated **raised-field agriculture system** and extensive use of **terracing and irrigation**, which enabled it to achieve yields in excess of even modern petrochemical farming (see below), and supported the development of a sophisticated culture. The Tiwanaku people built pyramids, temples, and colossal statues.



Tiwanaku yields
Raised fields combined with irrigation canals enabled Tiwanaku to achieve yields of up to 21 tonnes per hectare, according to experimental reconstructions.

c.730s Late Classic **Maya civilization** reaches height

731 Islamic forces beat Eudo, duke of Aquitaine, at Arles

733 Tang state employs 17,680 **civil servants**

737 Charles Martel recaptures **Avignon** from Islamic forces

739 Kingdom of **Asturias** expands into Portugal

740 Battle of **Acroinon:** Leo III defeats Arabs in Anatolia

741 Death of **Leo III**, Byzantine Emperor

741 Death of Charles Martel, succeeded by **Pepin the Short** and **Carloman**

746 Terrible **plague** afflicts **Byzantine empire**

747 **Pepin** becomes sole ruler of Frankish kingdoms on his brother's death

750 **Battle of the Zab** followed by general massacre of Umayyads

c.731 English Monk **Bede** completes his *History of the English People*

732 Charles Martel defeats Arabic/Moorish forces at **Battle of Tours–Poitiers**

738 **Trans-Saharan Arab expedition** returns with quantities of gold

739 Charles Martel in alliance with Liutprand, King of the Lombards, drives Arabs from **Provence**

c.740 **Chinese poetry** evolving, with Li Po and Tu Fu active under Tang patronage

744 Assassination of Umayyad Caliph Walid II; Marwan II accedes to caliphate

745 Foundation of **Uighur Empire** in Central Asia

749 **Abu al-Abbas** proclaimed **caliph**

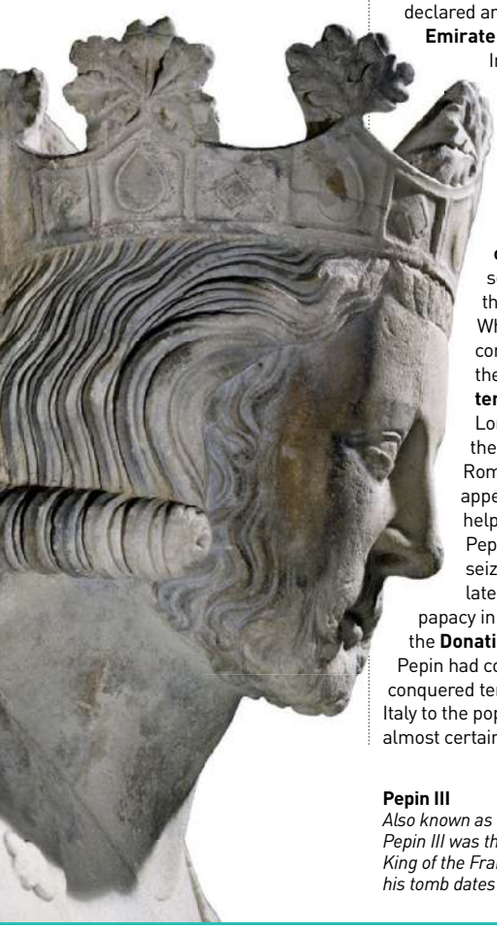
c.750 Height of Maya city-state of **Tikal** in Central America, and pre-Inca Andean city-state of **Tiwanaku**

751–760

The interior of the Mosque of Cordoba, Spain, shows architecture from the earliest phase of construction during the reign of Abd al-Rahman I.

UNDER THE NEW ABBASID CALIPHS (see 741–50) the Islamic empire continued to grow. Initial success came in 751 against the Chinese in the Silk Route kingdom of Tashkent. The Islamic armies were victorious at the **Battle of Talas River** near Samarkand, which led to the loss of most of Tang China's Central Asian possessions and introduced the Islamic world to **papermaking**. Outlying regions of the caliphate asserted their autonomy. In Spain in 756, one of the last surviving Umayyads, Abd al-Rahman I, declared an independent **Emirate of Cordoba**.

In Europe, the Carolingian Pepin III (*c.*714–68) **deposed the last Merovingian king**, Childeric III. With the pope's support **Pepin was crowned** and was soon able to return the papal favour. When the Lombards conquered Ravenna, the **last Byzantine territory in Italy**, the Lombard king, Aistulf then set his eyes on Rome. Pope Stephen II appealed to Pepin for help, and in 755 and 756 Pepin invaded Italy, seizing Ravenna. It was later claimed by the papacy in a document entitled the **Donation of Pepin**, that Pepin had conceded all former conquered territories in northern Italy to the pope, but this was almost certainly not the case.



Pepin III
Also known as Pepin the Short, Pepin III was the first Carolingian King of the Franks. This carving from his tomb dates to the 13th century.

761–770

The two-tier crop rotation system introduced in the 760s divided fields between cultivated and fallow land, then alternated, promoting soil fertility.

THE DEATH OF PEPIN III IN 758, had seen the Frankish kingdom customarily divided between his sons Carloman and Charles (see panel, below).

Meanwhile, the great monastic retreat on the Scottish **isle of Iona** was developing a reputation for piety and scholarship. It is possible that one of the treasures of Celtic Christianity – the **Book of Kells** – was produced by monks in the monastery at Iona. Lavishly decorated and illuminated, this priceless artefact survived the Viking raids (see 791–800), and for safekeeping it was later transferred to a monastery at Kells in Ireland.

The **founding of Baghdad** in 762 signalled the arrival of the first truly Islamic imperial city. Sited near Ctesiphon (the old Sasanian capital), the new city was carefully laid out on a circular plan and was connected to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers by canals. Baghdad became a trading hub that attracted merchants from northern Europe, India, and China.

Charlemagne's European Conquests
Charlemagne inherited land from his father then embarked on war after war, continuing the work of his father and grandfather.

KEY
- Frankish Empire on Charlemagne's accession
- Charlemagne's conquests
- Regions recognizing Charlemagne as overlord

CHARLEMAGNE (748–814)

Athletic and physically impressive, Charlemagne spoke Latin and understood Greek, but never learned to read. His intent was to extend Frankish hegemony, foster a close relationship with the papacy, and reform the Church to ensure divine support for the Frankish Kingdom. This depiction from a 15th century tapestry is testament his enduring legacy.

771–780

Roland bids farewell to Charlemagne, in this medieval illustration on vellum.

THE DEATH OF CARLOMAN IN 771 meant that Charlemagne became sole ruler of the Franks. The following year he launched a series of bloody campaigns with the aim of bringing the peoples east of the Rhine back under Frankish rule – they had been subject to the authority of the preceding Merovingian Dynasty.

At this time the various Saxon tribes were still pagans, and Charlemagne was determined to convert them to Christianity and thus bring them under the hegemony of the Frankish state. From 773–74 he conquered the kingdom of the Lombards, **bringing northern Italy into his empire** and establishing his rule over Venetia, Dalmatia, and Corsica, thus extending his reach down both sides of the Adriatic coast and into the Mediterranean. In the late 770s, he attempted to **project his power into Spain** by taking advantage of infighting among the Muslim rulers. Invited to intervene in local politics by disgruntled emirs, Charlemagne

751 Secret of **papermaking** passes to the Islamic world
751 Pepin the Short becomes **first Carolingian King**
754 Al-Mansur becomes **second Abbasid caliph**
756 **Cordoba Emirate** in Spain marks start of break-up of united Islamic caliphate
757 Offa becomes **King of Mercia**
757 In China, General **An Lushan is assassinated** and his rebellion suppressed
759 Pepin expels Moors from Languedoc and **extends Frankish rule** to Pyrenees
760 Abbasids adopt **Indian numerals**
c.760s **Crop rotation** system introduced in Europe
762 Caliphate capital moves to **Baghdad**
763 **Tibetan empire** sacks Tang capital at Chang'an
765 Split between **Imami and Ismaili Shiites**
768 **Death of Pepin III**, Charles and Carloman share his kingdom
771 Charlemagne **sole king of Franks** after death of Carloman
772 Charlemagne begins conquest of **East Francia**
774 Charlemagne conquers **Lombardy**
775 Death of al-Mansur; **al-Mahdi becomes caliph**

781–790

Offa's Dyke, which roughly follows the line of the Welsh–English border, was constructed during the reign of Offa of Mercia; stretches are still visible today.

sent his armies across the Pyrenees but they **failed to take the city of Saragossa** (modern-day Zaragoza in Spain) and were forced to retreat.

This botched expedition inadvertently launched one of the great romances of medieval times, the **legend of Roland**. In 778, Roland, one of Charlemagne's generals, was killed during an attack on the rearguard of the Carolingian armies as they retreated through the Pyrenean valley of **Roncesvalles**. The attack was actually carried out by Basques, but Roland's Breton followers took up the tale and as it spread through France in the following centuries it morphed into a legend with many fictitious elements: Roland became the nephew of an elderly, white-bearded Charlemagne; his attackers the perfidious Saracens; and Roland was Count of the Marches of Brittany. By the 11th century, the **"Song of Roland"** appeared as an early *chanson de geste*; a heroic epic of the age of chivalry.

In Constantinople, the **death of Emperor Leo IV** brought to the throne his infant son, **Constantine VI**. During his minority the empire was under the regency of the **Empress Irene**, his mother.

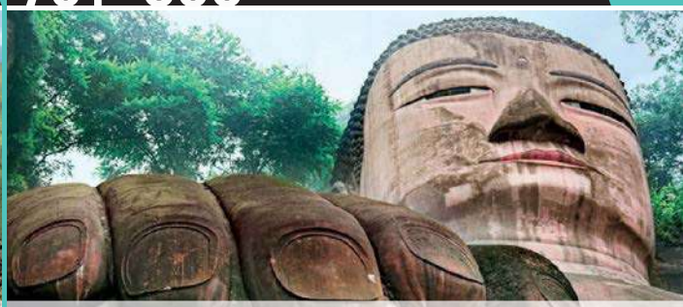
CHARLEMAGNE'S CONQUEST OF WEST SAXONY in 782 comprised a bloody development with the mass execution of 4,500 Saxon prisoners at Werden. This event was appropriated by Nazi historians in the 1930s as a sort of pre-Christian Germanic martyrdom, while others have called into question its details and even occurrence. Meanwhile, concerned about ignorance and illiteracy among clergy, Charlemagne launched a Carolingian cultural renaissance.

In 786, **Haroun al-Rashid** (r.786–809) acceded to the caliphate in Baghdad. Under his rule the Barmakid family gained great power as his viziers (high-ranking advisors) and favourites, while the **intellectual and cultural flowering of the Islamic world** gathered pace. Growing enthusiasm among the rich and powerful for books encouraged scholars to begin translating ancient Greek and Roman texts into Arabic.

In 785, Offa of Mercia (r.757–96), effective overlord of Britain, started constructing the monumental earthwork known as Offa's Dyke, on the border between Wales and Mercia. Originally 27m (89ft) wide and 8m (26ft) high, the purpose of the dyke is unknown, and it probably fell into disuse soon after its completion.

Imperial gift
An exquisite water jug sent to Charlemagne by Haroun al-Rashid, probably c.800.

791–800



The giant Buddha at Leshan in China was begun in 713 and finished 90 years later.

VIKING RAIDS on the shores of the British Isles started in 789 and gathered pace in the 790s with the looting of the rich monasteries of Lindisfarne and Iona. The "Vikings" (possibly from the Old Norse language) originated in Scandanavia.

In Tang China, the **influence of Buddhism continued to grow**, signalled by monuments such as the **Leshan Buddha**, a giant statue of the seated Buddha carved into a bluff next to the confluence of several major rivers.

In Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), the emperor invited his **mother Irene to become co-ruler** in 792; four years later she had him blinded and declared herself empress. This move spurred the scholar Alcuin of York to suggest that the imperial seat was effectively vacant, and on 25 December 800, **Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the Romans** by his ally, Pope Leo III. In the same year he received an embassy from Haroun al-Rashid, emblematic of how the focus of power in Europe had shifted.

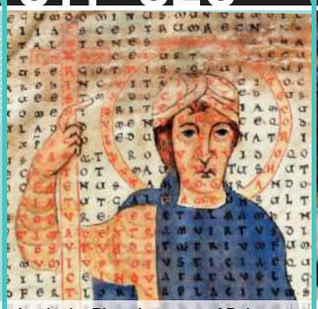
In 800, the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad were forced to recognize more or less **complete loss of authority in Africa west of Egypt**. They conceded to the emir of the province of Ifriqiya (modern-day Tunisia and part of Algeria) the right to make his post hereditary. The emir, Ibrahim ibn Aghlab, thus **founded the Aghlabid Dynasty**. This paid tribute to Baghdad and nominally recognized Abbasid authority, but ruled much of North Africa as an independent state.

Functional and stylish brooch
Skilfully crafted out of gold, this Viking brooch was not only beautiful but also practical, used to fasten cloaks or other clothing.

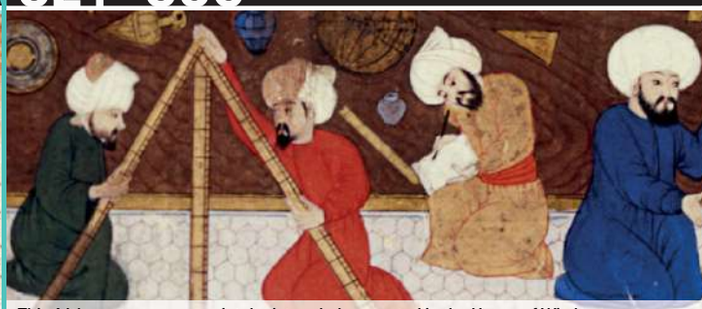
> "[CHARLEMAGNE] WAS **LARGE** AND **STRONG** AND OF LOFTY **STATURE**, THOUGH NOT DISPROPORTIONATELY TALL."
>
> **Einhard, Charlemagne's friend and Frankish historian**, *c.830*

778 Failed Carolingian expedition to Spain, **Siege of Saragossa**
778 Battle of **Roncesvalles**
780 Byzantine **regency of Irene**
781 Nestorian Christians in China erect **Nestorian Tablet** in Chang'an
781 **Carolingian Renaissance** begins
782 Charlemagne conquers **West Saxony**
785 Construction of **Offa's Dyke** begins
786 Haroun al-Rashid becomes caliph; **ascendancy of Barmakids**
787 Council of Nicaea **ends iconoclasm** controversy
789 First **Viking attack** in Britain
790 Army mutinies in Constantinople depose Irene, and puts **Constantine VI in charge**
c.788 **Moroccan Shiite revolt** under Idris
792 Byzantine emperor Constantine VI makes his **mother Irene** co-ruler
793 Vikings sack **Lindisfarne**
794 Japanese capital moves to **Kyoto**
795 Vikings raid **Ireland**
796 **Offa of Mercia** dies (b.730)
796 Charlemagne battles **Avars**, loots Avar hoard
797 **Irene** has Constantine blinded and declares herself **empress** once more
800 Charlemagne crowned **Emperor of the Romans**
800 **Aghlabid dynasty** (800–909) established in Tunisia, Algeria, and Sicily
800 **Zen Buddhism** pre-eminent in China

504 THE NUMBER OF **STATUES** AT **BOROBUDUR TEMPLE**



Louis the Pious in a copy of Raban Maur's *Book of the Cross*.



This 14th-century manuscript depicts scholars seated in the House of Wisdom; the Abbasid caliphs recruited scholars of all religions, from Europe to China.

THE TIBETAN EMPIRE EXPANDED in the early part of the 9th century, and extended its control to the Bay of Bengal. Its influence in Central Asia was indicative of **Tang China**'s weakness in the region. Meanwhile, in northern India the **Gurjara-Prathihara dynasty**, which had united the region and held back the advance of Islam, continued to grow in strength with the conquest of Kanauj in modern-day India by **Nagabhata II**, around 801.

The **Temple of Borobudur**, a **Buddhist monument** in central Java, Southeast Asia, was completed in the early 9th century. The colossal structure, which is the largest Buddhist monument in the world, contains over **2 million stone blocks** and is covered in almost 2,000 sqm (21,500 sqft) of carvings. The monument is a three-dimensional *mandala*, or cosmic wheel; walking its path, which is a journey of over 3km (2 miles), re-enacts the journey towards nirvana (englightenment). Its construction was an epic achievement, and a testament to the power of the **Srivijayan Empire** (*c*.760–1402), which had grown rich from the extensive maritime trade of the region.

For much of this era **Srivijayan influence** extended over the Southeast Asian mainland, including the **Mekong basin kingdom** formerly known to the Chinese as Funan. But, in 802, **Jayavarman II**, a vassal ruler whose family had been quietly extending their territory since around 770, was powerful enough to establish an independent **Khmer Empire** and have himself proclaimed *chakravartin*, or "universal ruler". In Sanskrit this translates as "god-king"– the authority of Khmer kings rested on their direct link to the gods, which was reflected in the monuments they would construct at the temple city of Angkor in centuries to come (see 880–90).

Jayavarman II
This statue of Jayavarman II from the 12th-century Bayon temple at Angkor Thom, was constructed by his namesake, Jayavarman VII.

Around 801, **Bulan**, the Khan of the Khazar Empire (see 861-70), hosted a debate between the three Abrahamic faiths, and chose **Judaism**.

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BYZANTINES AND BULGARS (see 671–90) continued through the early part of the 9th century. Despite Byzantine emperor **Nicephorus I** (r. 802–11) twice sacking the Bulgar capital Pliskas, in 809 and 811, **the Bulgar khan, Krum**, fought back, meeting his foe in battle later in 811. Nicephorus was killed and Krum had his foe's skull lined with silver for use as a drinking cup. Two years later, Krum attempted to besiege the Byzantine capital **Constantinople**, but was unable to breach the walls and so retreated, **devastating Thrace** for good measure.

Charlemagne (see 760–800) died in 814 and his last remaining son, **Louis the Pious** (r. 814–40), acceded to the throne. He had been crowned co-emperor by his father the year before.

THE HOUSE OF WISDOM, or *Bait al-Hikma*, was an institute devoted to the translation of classical scholarship and the pursuit of learning in **Abbasid Baghdad**. It was the epicentre of the Islamic intellectual renaissance, the heart of the Translation Movement, and the home of great scholars such as **Al-Kharwizmi** (*c*.780–850); algebra takes its name from his great treatise on mathematics of *c*.830, the *Kitab al-Jabir,* or *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing*.

The House of Wisdom was consolidated *c*.822 by **al-Ma'mun**. After the death of his father **Haroun al-Rashid** (see 791–800), and after a brief struggle, he had succeeded to the Caliphate in 813 and continued the tradition of intellectual patronage, building observatories and gathering the best scholars from around the world. Mimicking the practises of the Abbasid's Persian predecessors – the **Sasanians** – the **Translation Movement** collected manuscripts from other cultures and older traditions, and **translated** them **into Arabic**, thus preserving much ancient scholarship that would otherwise have been lost. Ptolemy's seminal work on cosmology, the *Almagest*, for instance, was translated from Greek into Arabic around 827, and it was only through this translation that European scholars would later be able to access this ancient text.

Civil strife in the **Carolingian Empire** (800–88) resulted from tension between **Louis the Pious and his sons** over their inheritances. After the death in 819 of his first wife – mother of his sons **Lothair, Pepin**, and **Louis the German** – Louis the Pious had married the ambitious Judith of Bavaria who prevailed on Louis to grant to her son, **Charles the Bald** (823–77), lands that had previously been promised to **Lothair**. In retaliation Lothair,

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

Thanks to the House of Wisdom and other similar centres of scholarship across the Caliphate, Islamic scholars went far beyond the learning of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Islamic scientists made great advances in fields such as alchemy (proto-chemistry), medicine, toxicology, metallurgy, mathematics, and astronomy. This illustration from *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* shows an innovative handwashing device.

400 THOUSAND THE NUMBER OF **BOOKS** IN THE **HOUSE OF WISDOM**

c.801 Height of **Tibetan Empire**
c.801 Khazarian king **Bulan** hosts debate between three Abrahamic faiths; chooses **Judaism**
802 Empress Irene exiled; **Nicephorus** becomes Byzantine emperor
803 Abbasid caliph **Haroun al-Rashid** destroys Barmakids
809 Nicephorus raids Bulgar capital Pliska
811 Krum of Bulgaria kills Nicephorus
811 First paper currency "**flying cash**" in China
825 Norsemen reach the Faroe Islands
827 First Islamic incursion into **Sicily**
828 Wessex dominant in England; Egbert acknowledged as *bretwalda* or overlord

c.801 In India, Gurjara-Prathihara king **Nagabhata II** conquers Kanauj
c.801 Construction of **Borobodur temple** in Java
802 Khmer Empire established by Jayavarman II
805 Franks under **Pepin** defeat Avars in Hungary
c.810 Islamic **algebra** system of Persian mathematician **Musa al-Khwarazmi** established
813 Al-Ma'mun becomes Abbasid caliph
814 Death of **Charlemagne** (born *c*.742); Louis the Pious ascends to Frankish throne
c.820 Founding of the **House of Wisdom** in Baghdad
825 King Egbert of **Wessex** defeats King Beornwulf at Ellandun
827 Muslim fugitives from Spain conquer **Crete** and use it as base for piracy
829 Thai empire of **Nanchao** expands into southern China

831–840

Louis' co-emperor since 824, rallied his brothers in revolt against their father. In early 830, **Louis was deposed**, and although Lothair's misrule saw his father restored by the autumn, the older man's authority was compromised and the scene set for worse conflict to come.

Wessex, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in south and west England, became the **dominant English power** as a result of the victory of King Egbert over King Beornwulf of Mercia at the Battle of Ellandun, Wiltshire, in 825. Egbert was subsequently able to conquer the southeastern counties of England, and by around 828 Wessex was the most powerful state in the land, with Egbert recognized as *bretwalda*, or overlord, of England until his death in 839.

The emergence of **Great Moravia** began around 830, with the establishment of the Principality of Moimir, to the west of the White Carpathians, under the rule of **Moimir I**. Moimir was one of two Slavic polities to establish themselves in the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Avars in 805; the other – to the east of the White Carpathians, in what is now Slovakia – was Nitra, under the rule of **Prince Pribina**. In 833, Moimir would conquer Nitra, setting his principality on the path to becoming the **Great Moravian Empire**.

The area around Segesta in Sicily, with its Greek ruins, was occupied early on in the Aghlabid invasion of the island.

THE ISLAMIC CONQUEST OF SICILY had begun in 827 with the arrival of an invasion force from Aghlabid in North Africa, sent by the **Emir Ziyadat Allah I** (r. 817–38) to take advantage of **internal divisions** among the **Byzantine** rulers of the island. Hindered by outbreaks of plague, the Islamic forces made little headway until 831 when **Palermo** fell after a year-long siege. The city then became the capital of Islamic Sicily, although total conquest of the island did not happen until 902.

The Field of Lies, in Alsace in 833, was a meeting brokered by the Pope to mediate between the **Frankish rulers**, which resulted in the desertion of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald by their followers, and their subsequent imprisonment. This was one episode in a series of conflicts that saw the collapse of central authority and increasing Frankish vulnerability to raids from the Norsemen to the north and west, **Bulgars** and **Magyars** to the east, and **Saracen** pirates to the south.

Saracen warriors
"Saracens" was a European term for Muslims, especially those occupying Sicily and raiding Europe.

841–850

The ancient city of Pagan, in Burma, became the capital of a powerful Buddhist state occupying roughly the same area as the current region.

THE TREATY OF VERDUN in 843 marked the definitive division of Charlemagne's empire. After the death of Louis the Pious in 840, his three surviving sons (see 821–30) embroiled themselves in further conflict over land. In 842, Charles the Bald and Louis the German teamed up and swore oaths to impose a settlement on Lothair that saw the **Frankish Empire divided** into regions. These broadly equated to France in the west, Germany in the east, and a middle kingdom that would later become known as *Lotharii regnum*, or Lotharingia (modern Lorraine).

The rise of the **Cholas**, a Tamil dynasty of **southern India**, can be dated to 846, when the Chola king Vijayalaya, captured the city of Tanjore from the **Pandya kingdom**.

The **Capitulary of Meersen** was a proclamation by the West Frankish king Charles the Bald in 847, ordering every free man to choose himself a lord. Charles intended the decree to facilitate the levy of armies, but it was also indicative of the increasing inability of the Frankish rulers to protect their subjects. In place of central authority, the peasants relied on local lords; they gave up freedoms and bound themselves to a feudal aristocracy in return for protection from **Vikings** and other raiders.

Coffee plant
The coffee bush is native to the mountains of Ethiopia and Yemen, where it was first recorded in use in the mid-15th century.

In around 848, the **Burmese city-state of Pagan** was founded in the Irrawaddy Valley. Indian influence is readily perceivable in the architecture of this part of Southeast Asia due to cultural, religious, and mercantile ties.

The legendary **discovery of coffee** is dated to around 850 when it is said that an Ethiopian goatherd named Kaldi noticed that, after eating some red berries, his goats became extremely lively. He brought a sample to a local Islamic holy man, who, disapproving of intoxicants, threw them on the fire where they roasted and released a delicious aroma.

830 Civil strife in **Carolingian Empire**

831 **Islamic conquest of Sicily** continues; capture of Palermo

c.830 **Principality of Moimir**, which will become the **Great Moravian Empire**, established

833 **Field of Lies**: Louis the Pious deposed, Charles imprisoned

833 **Al Mu'Tasim** accedes to Abbasid caliphate, creates *ghulam* slave army of Turks

833 War in Deccan; **Gurjara kingdom** of North India diminished

834 **Louis** restored to Frankish throne

836 Bhoja restores **Gurjara kingdom** in India

836 **Vikings** raid inland Ireland

838 Death of Pepin; **division of Frankish Empire**

840 Collapse of **Uighur Empire**, Central Asia; driven out by the Khirgiz, they settle in Tarim Basin

841–42 Civil war between sons of Louis the Pious

841 **Viking kingdom** of **Dublin** founded

842 Vikings sack **London**

843 **Treaty of Verdun** ends Carolingian civil war

846 Chola king Vijayalaya captures Tanjore from Pandyas; rise to power of **Chola dynasty**

848 Founding of Burmese city-state of **Pagan**

c.850 Earliest **gunpowder** in China

c.850 First **Islamic astrolabes**

c.850 Legendary discovery of **coffee**

c.850 Collapse of **Tibetan Empire**

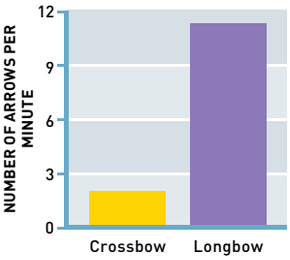
851–860

Monument in the courtyard of the Maya city of Palenque.

THE DECLINE OF THE CLASSIC MAYA civilization continued as the wave of abandonments that began with **Palenque** at the end of the 9th century spread south and east into the Classic Maya heartland. The last recorded inscriptions at Mayan cities Quiriguá and Copán date to 810 and 822; **at Caracol to 859**; and at Tikal to 889. A combination of **drought, famine, disease**, and social upheaval were probably responsible, as overpopulated cities and their overstretched resources reached a tipping point.

The first recorded use of a **crossbow** was in France in 851. Although slower to reload than a longbow, the crossbow, or *arbalest*, required little training or strength to operate.

The **Fujiwara regency**, assumed by Yoshifusa (*c.*804–72) on the accession of his grandson, the child-emperor Seiwa in 858, marked the Fujiwara clan's domination of Japanese power.



Crossbow vs longbow
Although the longbow could be fired much faster, the crossbow had a greater range and was easy to operate.

861–870

The frontispiece of *The Diamond Sutra*, the earliest known printed work, shows Buddha explaining the sutra (sermon) to an elderly disciple.

KHAZAR EMPIRE

The Caspian Sea is still known in the region as the Khazar Sea for the empire that ruled the area between it and the Black Sea from the 8th to 10th centuries. A contributing cause to the empire's decline may have been a rise of 7m (23 ft) in the sea level.

CYRILLIC SCRIPT WAS INVENTED by the Byzantine missionary later known as **St Cyril** in around 863. Originally named Constantine, Cyril and his brother Methodius were sent to **convert the Slavs** in **Moravia** by Byzantine emperor, Michael III in around 862. Cyril devised a new "Glagolitic" script to **translate the Bible** into Slavic; this later became Cyrillic script.

In 867, Basil, a favourite of Michael III, deposed his master and took the throne as **Basil I**. His reign marked the start of one of the most glorious periods of Byzantine history. Intent on restoring the empire internally and externally, Basil rebuilt the army and navy and revised the legal system.

The **Diamond Sutra** of 868 is the world's oldest surviving printed book. An illustrated Buddhist text, it was found in a cave in Dunhuang, a Silk Road town in northwest China.

Around the mid-9th century, the **Khazars adopted Judaisim** (see 801–10). According to tradition, they chose an **Abrahamic faith** to put them on equal footing with Christianity in the Byzantine Empire and Islam in the Caliphate.

Early Cyrillic script
This wax tablet contains psalms of David, written in the early 11th century. It is believed to be the oldest document written in Cyrillic.

871–880

The landscape of Iceland offered scant welcome, yet Vikings settled here by 874.

ALFRED THE GREAT OF ENGLAND, an educated man who had spent time in Rome with the Pope, acceded to the throne of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of **Wessex** in 871. During the reign of his elder brother Aethelred I (r.865–71), **Danish Vikings** had invaded Wessex, but Alfred had helped defeat them at the **Battle of Ashdown** in 870. On assuming the kingship, Alfred averted crisis by defeating the Danes at Wilton in southwest England, but another attack in 875 caught him unawares and he was forced to retreat to the Somerset marshes. According to the popular legend, Alfred was here given shelter by a peasant woman who, unaware of his identity, left him to watch some cakes that were cooking on the fire. Preoccupied with the problems of his kingdom, Alfred let the cakes burn. Nonetheless he was able to summon his armies and defeated the Danish king Guthrum at the Battle of Edington in 878, forcing him to conclude the **Peace of Wedmore**, under the terms of which **Guthrum converted to Christianity** and agreed to a division of the country (see 881–90).

The **settlement of Iceland** demonstrated how the **Vikings** were advancing on other fronts. Irish monks had probably already reached the North Atlantic island, and Viking navigators had other clues to its existence, such as the passage of migrating birds. Vikings had already visited the island and even over-wintered there, but the first permanent settlement, according to the medieval Icelandic *Landámabók* (Book of Settlement), was by the Norwegian chieftain Ingolfur Arnarson in around 874. According to legend, he selected the spot for his homestead by throwing his

King Alfred
A statue of King Alfred was erected at his capital, Winchester, in 1901. His sword doubles as a crucifix, emblematic of his militant faith.

c.850s Continued decline of **Classic Maya** civilization
851 Crossbow introduced to France
857 Founding of **kingdom of Navarre** in Spain
857 Plague of ergot poisoning in Western Europe from infected cereals
858 Fujiwara regency in Japan; Fujiwara clan cement hold on power
862 Vikings found **Novgorod**
863 Byzantines win victory over Arabs in Anatolia
863 Invention of earliest form of **Cyrillic writing**
866 Vikings capture York, England
866 Bulgars convert to Christianity
867 Accession of **Basil I**, founder of Macedonian dynasty
868 Creation of **Diamond Sutra**, oldest surviving printed book
868 Ahmad ibn-Tulun founds **Tulunid Dynasty** in Egypt
869 Last dated stele at **Tikal** in Mesoamerica
870 Treaty of Meersen divides Frankish lands of the Kingdom of Lothar I
871 Alfred becomes King of Wessex, England
874 Vikings settle **Iceland**
874 Disappearance of **Al-Mahdi**, the Hidden Imam of Twelver Shi'ites
874 Persian literary renaissance begins in Bukhara
874 Peasant revolt against Tang after terrible drought in **China**
875 Catalonia in Spain becomes partially autonomous from Carolingian Empire
878 Battle of Edington in England followed by **Peace of Wedmore**

881–890

The façade of a building known as the Nunnery annex, at Chichen Itza, the leading Maya city-state of the Late or Terminal Classic Period.

891–900

Symeon of Bulgaria, depicted in the centre, had been educated as a monk in Constantinople before returning to take control of the Bulgars in 893.

> “WE DISCERN ACROSS THE CENTURIES A **COMMANDING** AND **VERSATILE INTELLIGENCE,** WIELDING WITH EQUAL FORCE THE SWORD OF **WAR** AND OF **JUSTICE.**”
>
> **Winston Churchill, British Politician,** on King Alfred, 1956–58

throne pillars overboard and following their drift.

The **Twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi** – believed by some Shi'ites to be the ultimate saviour of humankind – miraculously disappeared in 874. According to some Shi'ites, when the Eleventh Imam, Hasan al-Askari, died in 874, his successor, a seven-year-old boy, went into literal and spiritual hiding, and ever since has been said to be "occulted", or hidden until the day of his **messianic return**.

The **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**, a unique written record of events from wars and politics to the weather, was kept from around 880 until the mid-12th century. It was indicative of the scholarship that King Alfred fostered, inviting scholars to England and translating major classical works himself.

SWEDISH VIKINGS, known as the **Varangians or Rus**, used rivers such as the **Volga** and **Dnieper** to push ever further inland from the Baltic, establishing dominion over the **eastern Slavs** of the region. Having **founded the settlement of Novgorod** in 862 and launched audacious raids on Constantinople by navigating rivers all the way to the Black Sea, they now colonized ever further south. In 882, the Rus **prince Oleg** (r. 882–912) defeated his rivals Askold and Dir, **seized** their settlement at **Kiev**, and transferred his capital there from Novgorod. The city would become the capital of **Kievan Rus**, a loose federation of territories, until 1169.

The **Danelaw** – the part of England in which Viking law was upheld – was formalized by the **Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum** in 886, following renewed attacks by Guthrum. Alfred would keep the south, including London, while the area to the north of a line between the Thames and Lea rivers went to the Danish, who would live under their own laws.

In 887, **Charles the Fat** (*c*.839–88), the last Carolingian king to rule both the primary Frankish territories, West and East Francia (modern-day France and Germany), was **deposed**. Charles, already king of the East Franks since 879, had been elected king of the West Franks in 884. However, he was a victim of the declining power and authority of the Carolingian monarchs (see 841–50). Unable or unwilling to meet the Vikings in battle – specifically during their **Siege of Paris** in 885–86 – he was proven incapable of protecting his people. **Odo**, Count of Paris (*c*.860–98), who had led a heroic defence against the Vikings in 885, was elected king of West Francia in 887. From now on, East and West Francia would develop as separate regions.

Slavonic–Viking Jewellery
Viking invaders conquered territories along Russia's waterways, establishing a hybrid culture that mixed Slavonic and Viking styles.

The catastrophic **decline of the Classic Maya city-states** of the southern lowlands continued throughout the 9th century, and **Tikal was abandoned** by around 889. Maya city-states of the north (the area of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula) now took precedence in what is known as the Late or Terminal Classic Period. Foremost among these civilizations was **Chichen Itza**, which commanded the advantage of *cenotes*, or water holes; of vital importance in this drought-vulnerable region.

THE GROWING POWER OF THE BULGAR KHANATE (see 811–20) worried the Byzantine emperor **Leo VI**, who in 895 prompted the **Magyars** to attack the Bulgars. However, this merely provoked the new khan, **Symeon** (r.893–927), to mobilize the Pechenegs – a tribe that had recently arrived on the Dnieper – to invade Magyar lands. The Magyars were forced to migrate west, settling in present-day **Hungary**, from where they launched extensive raids on Frankish territories for years to come. In the summer of 896, Symeon defeated a **Byzantine army** at Bulgarophygon, in modern-day Turkey, forcing the Byzantine emperor to pay tribute. Symeon would rule for another 30 years, vying for the Byzantine throne, only to be thwarted by the impenetrable walls of its capital, **Constantinople**, on numerous occasions.

The **Toltecs** (*c*.800–1000) were probably refugees from the **collapsed Teotihuacan culture** (see 690–700), who settled in the Valley of Mexico, founding a capital at **Tula** *c*.900, and forging a militaristic empire that inspired their descendants, the Aztecs.

Toltec coyote
Toltec art, such as this depiction of a coyote-god, influenced other pre-Columbian American civilizations, including the Aztecs.

880 **Huang Zhao**, peasant rebel turned general, usurps imperial throne from Tang emperor

879 **Nepal** independent from Tibet

880 War in India between **Pandya** and **Cholas**

880 first **Anglo-Saxon** chronicle written

882 Oleg seizes Kiev, makes it capital of **Kievan Rus**

884 **Huang Zhao of Tang China** defeated by Turkic armies, but Tang power shaken

887 **Odo** crowned King of West Francia

887 Carolingian **Charles the Fat** deposed

889 **Tikal** abandoned, **Chichen Itza** pre-eminent

896 Beginning of height of **Bulgarian Empire** under Symeon

899 Death of **Alfred the Great** of Wessex (b.849)

c.900 Vikings discover **Greenland**

c.900 Development of **Toltec** kingdom centred on **Tula** in Valley of Mexico

c.900 earliest versions of *al-Layla wa-Layla*, "One Thousand and One Nights"

901–910

This stone relief is from the Chinese Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. Breakdown of central authority in the period led to economic contraction.

TANG CHINA HAD BEEN IN MILITARY DECLINE since defeat by the Arabs at the Battle of Talas River in 751–760, and the **Huang Zhao rebellion** of the 880s signalled the end of the dynasty. **Zhuwen** (*c*.852–912) was a warlord who had originally been part of the Huang Zhao uprising and then instrumental in the rebel defeat. Richly rewarded for his role, he steadily built up his power base until in 904 he was ready to seize control, **executing** the **Tang emperor Zhaozong** and most of his sons, and installing the emperor's 13-year-son on the throne as a puppet ruler. In 907, he took the throne for himself, founding the **Later Liang Dynasty**, but although he controlled the northern heartland of China – the Yellow River Valley region of Huang He – he was unable to prevent the south fragmenting into ten independent kingdoms. The Later Liang Dynasty was short-lived (907–923), with a succession of groups seizing control of the Huang He region and founding dynasties of their own, but proving unable to hold on to power. This period of anarchy, known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, lasted until the establishment of the **Northern Song Dynasty** (see 951–960), and was a time of great hardship. Authority broke down, the economy collapsed, and barter replaced money in many areas. There was extensive flood and famine as flood defences and irrigation works fell into disrepair.

To the west and north of the Five Dynasties region, **Shatuo Turks** and **Khitan Mongols** consolidated kingdoms of their own. The Khitans of southern Manchuria established their empire in 905 under the leadership of Yelü Abaoji (872–926). He went on to declare himself emperor in 916, founding the **Liao Dynasty**, which lasted until 1125, including a brief period as one of the Five Dynasties controlling northern China.

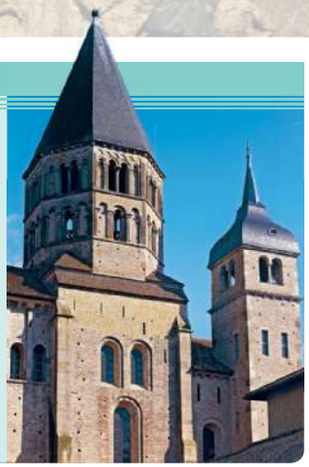
In 909, Sa'id ibn-Husayn, an Ismaili Shi'ite, overthrew the **Sunni Aghlabid Dynasty** in Kairouan (modern-day Tunisia), declared himself **al-Mahdi** (the Shi'ite messiah), and **founded the Fatimid Dynasty**, named for the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, from whom he claimed descent.

The **Abbey of Cluny** in Burgundy, founded in 910 by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, became the centre of a **monastic "empire"** in Europe (see panel, above).

Displaced westwards by the Pechenegs (see 891–900), the **Magyars** launched a series of devastating **raids** throughout the decade. In 901, they ravaged Carinthia, in 906 and 907 they wreaked havoc in Moravia, and in 908 they attacked Bavaria, Saxony, and Thuringia. With the Frankish emperor unwilling or unable to help, the East Franks elected regional "dukes" to defend against the incursions.

Fatimid era text
Named for Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, the Fatimids proved patrons of learning through their sponsorship of Cairo's al-Azhar school.

ABBEY OF CLUNY



William the Pious, who donated the land for the abbey in 910, placed no obligations on its Benedictine monks, so that it was free from secular oversight and answerable only to the Pope. Cluny became the centre of a monastic empire of great power, governing around 10,000 monks. In 1098, Pope Urban II, a former Abbot of Cluny, declared it "the light of the world".

The Five Dynasties
A succession of regimes was unable to consolidate power, leaving warlords to the north and south to set up independent kingdoms. The fractured geopolitical situation is reflected in this map, which shows a tangle of borders and states.

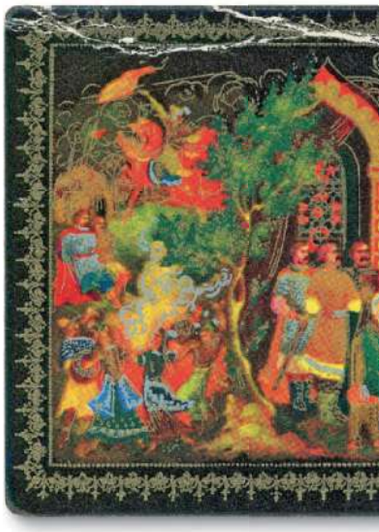
KEY
- Chinese states
- States occupied by non–Chinese peoples

911–920

ABD AL-RAHMAN III BECAME THE NEW UMAYYAD RULER of the **Cordoba emirate** on the death of his grandfather, Abdallah, in 912. His territories had been reduced by rebellions and he quickly set about regaining much of his lost kingdom. During his reign and that of his successors, **Cordoba** reached the peak of its power (see 921–930).

According to traditional sources, **Prince Igor, ruler of Kievan Rus** from 914–945, was the son of the legendary Rurik, who founded **Novgorod** in 862. Under his protection, **Kievan Rus** (see 881–890) became a

Igor I of Kiev
Igor, who ruled from 914 until his death in 945, gestures to his court in this19th-century illustration.



c.900 Era of **castle building** begins in Europe
901 Magyars ravage **Carinthia**
902 Muslims destroy **Taormina**, last **Byzantine** stronghold in **Sicily**
904 Chinese warlord **Zhuwen** murders Tang emperor, Zhaozong, sets up one of his sons as puppet emperor
905 Khitan Empire founded in southern Manchuria
905 End of **Tulunid dynasty**; Abbasid caliphate regains control of Syria and Egypt
905 *Kokinshu*, earliest known anthology of **Japanese poetry** written
906–07 **Magyars** destroy **Moravians**
907 Collapse of **Tang dynasty**; start of **Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms era** (to 960)
907 **Oleg of Kievan Rus** attacks Constantinople
908 **Magyars** attack Bavaria, Saxony, and Thuringia
909 Shi'ite **Fatimid dynasty** founded in Tunis
910 Foundation of Benedictine **Abbey of Cluny**
c.910 Rise of the **Mwene Mutapa Empire** in Zimbabwe
911 Norse Chieftain **Rollo** granted Normandy
912 **Abd al-Rahman III** becomes emir, and institutes zenith of **Umayyad** emirate of Cordoba
913 **Prince Igor** becomes ruler of Kievan Rus
914 **Fatimids** take Alexandria

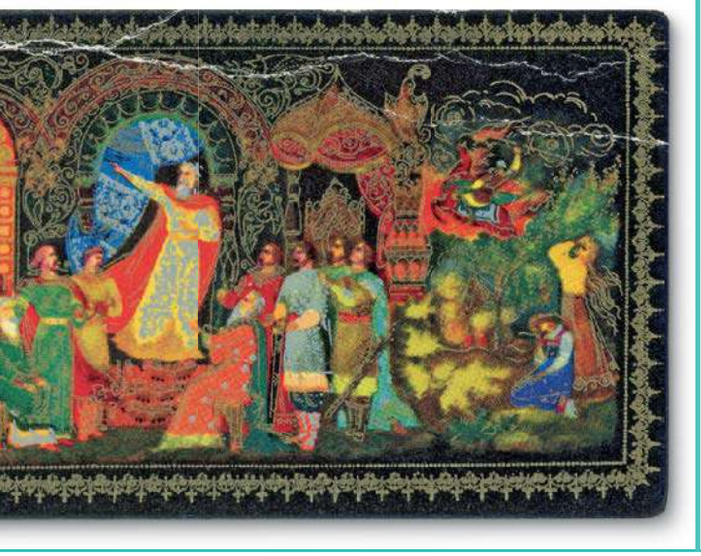
921–930

This decorative panel at the Caliph's Palace in Madinat az-Zahra, Spain, was erected by Al-Rahman III in imitation of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad.

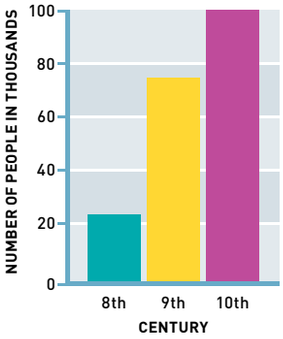
formidable power in the region, earning the respect of the Byzantines by force of arms during the **Rus-Byzantine war** of 941, and winning lucrative trade concessions from them.

In 911, in recognition of helplessness in the face of constant and devastating **Viking raids** (see 881–890), the West Frankish king, **Charles III**, granted a large area of land guarding the mouth of the River Seine, which consisted of a large part of what later became Normandy, to the Norse chieftain, **Rollo**, also known as Hrolf, on the condition that he became a Christian. Charles' grip on the crown was tenuous; the authority of the Carolingian monarchs had declined precipitously, with local counts ruling what were effectively independent fiefs that owed only nominal authority to the king (see 841–850). A powerful faction of West Frankish magnates had elected **Count Odo** of Paris to the kingship in 887, so Charles spent much of his reign engaged in civil war with Odo and his descendants.

One of the tribal dukes who came to power with the impotence of the Carolingians in the face of the Magyar threat, **Henry I,** was elected king of the East Franks in 919, founding the **Saxon Dynasty**. The last Carolingian monarch of the East Frankish kingdom, Louis the Child, died in 911, after which Conrad, duke of Franconia, was elected as king. On his death he nominated his strongest rival, Henry, as successor.



Lögberg, or Law Rock, in Iceland is the centre of the oldest parliament.



Cordoba's population growth
This estimate shows how Cordoba grew rapidly from a small town to become one of the world's biggest medieval cities.

THE WANING AUTHORITY OF THE ABBASIDS IN BAGHDAD prompted Abd al-Rahman III to declare himself the true caliph in 929, thus amending his kingdom, from emirate to **caliphate**. During the 10th century, his capital, Cordoba, became the largest and most developed city in Western Europe.

In 930, **Icelanders** started meeting to decide on justice and legislation at an outdoor assembly on the plains of **Thingvellir**. All free men who had not been outlawed could attend the **Althing**, making it the **oldest representative assembly** in the world.

During what archaeologists call the **Pueblo II phase**, the Pueblo peoples of Chaco Canyon, North America, were thriving. They built immense structures called "great houses", some with up to 700 rooms.

931–950

> "IN THIS YEAR, **KING AETHELSTAN,** LORD OF WARRIORS, RING-GIVER TO MEN… WON ETERNAL GLORY, IN BATTLE WITH SWORD EDGES, **AROUND BRUNABURH**"

Unknown author, from the Old English poem, *The Battle of Brunaburh,* 937

IN 932, THE UMMAYAD CALIPH ABD AL-RAHMAN III (see 911–920) captured Toledo, bringing all of Muslim Spain back under one banner. Al-Rahman also waged a successful war against the Christian kingdoms of **Leon** and **Navarre** on his northern borders, forcing them to acknowledge his overlordship. In general, Jews and Christians enjoyed tolerance under the caliphate, though they remained second-class citizens, making issues such as tax status a driving force behind conversion.

The **Silla kingdom** (see 651–670) was conquered by the **Koryo kingdom** in 935, completing the reunification of **Korea** under the Koryo leader Wang Kon, who now became **King T'aejo** (r.918–943). Wang Kon had acceded to power in the Three Kingdoms state of Koguryo in 918, renaming it and leading it in successful military ventures against the Kingdom of Paekche, who were conquered in 934, and the Silla. During his reign, T'aejo consolidated power by incorporating Silla nobility into his new ruling bureaucracy.

In one of the bloodiest battles ever fought on British soil, the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan (c.893–939) crushed an alliance of forces in 937, cementing his control of Britain and his kingship of a the now unified **Anglo-Saxon** realm of England. Alarmed by the prospect of Anglo-Saxon expansionism, the king of Alba (in modern-day Scotland) had joined forces with the Vikings and other northern British realms to counter the threat. The results were immortalized in an Old English poem recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (see 871–880), which reported that five kings and seven earls died on the battlefield, alongside "unnumber'd crowds" of soldiers. Victory confined the Welsh and Scottish to their borders, halted Viking expansionism, and helped create **England** as a nation.

In 946, the Persian Shi'ite **Buwayhids** took Baghdad and forced the caliph to recognize Ahmad ibn-Buwayh as supreme commander. Although **Abbasid caliphs** remained in place until 1258, they were mere figureheads; real power now passed to Buwayhid sultans who ruled from their capital in **Shiraz**, Persia.

Henry I (see 911–920) was one of the tribal dukes who came to power in the face of Magyar threat to the Carolingians. Known as Henry the Fowler, he enlarged the kingdom and inflicted the first great defeat that the Magyars (see 901–910) had experienced since beginning their raids into Europe, at the **Battle of Riade** in 933. Henry was powerful enough to ensure that on his death the succession would be hereditary, and the election of 936 was a formality, acknowledging his son, **Otto**, as the new king. Otto's coronation ceremony in 962 consciously emulated that of **Charlemagne** (see 761–770), and he was crowned at Aachen, the old imperial capital.

915 Chola king **Parantaka I** conquers Pandya kingdom in southern India

917 Magyars raid East and West Francia

917 Symeon declares himself Tsar of the **Bulgars**

917 Fatimids take Sicily

919 Henry the Fowler, Duke of Saxony, is elected **King Henry I of East Francia**, the first king of the Saxon dynasty

923 Later Liang, first of the Five Dynasties, overthrown by the Shatuo Turks

927 Death of **Symeon**, Tsar of the Bulgars (b.864/65)

929 Abd al-Rahman, Spanish emir, declares himself **caliph**

930 Meeting of the **Althing** in Iceland

932 Chinese **block printing invented**

932 Abd al-Rahman captures Toledo, and completes reunification of Muslim Spain

935 Unification of Korea as **Koryo kingdom**; conquers Silla

937 Battle of Brunanburh, Athelstan controls all of England

940s Linen and wool industry underway in **Flanders**

940 Mixtecs sack Zapotec capital, **Monte Alban**

946 Persian **Shi'ite Buwayhid dynasty** take power of Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad

c.950 Bogomils emerge in Bulgaria

Statue of Frey
The Vikings worshipped Frey, the Norse god of fertility. This statue from Sweden shows Frey holding his beard – a symbol of growth and virility.

Thor's hammer pendant
Thor's hammer – a symbol of power and virility – was a common theme for jewellery. Thor was the Norse god of thunder.

Gold arm ring
Decorated with patterns made by stamping, beading, and minute engraving, this arm ring from Räbylille in Denmark has crosses and tree motifs.

Silver figure of horseman
This stylized metal figure from Sweden probably represents a warrior on horseback. The Vikings were fine horsemen, but they preferred to travel by ship.

THE VIKINGS

THE ARTISTRY AND SKILL OF VIKING ARTISANS BELIES THEIR REPUTATION AS SAVAGES

Between the 8th and 11th centuries, the Viking world spanned Europe, from the Pontic Steppes in the south and east to the shores of North America in the west and north. This realm was tied together by a culture of arts and crafts.

The unifying motifs of Viking art and crafts were elaborate ornamentation, interlacing patterns, and stylized animals. The material culture of the Vikings was mostly utilitarian yet finely crafted. Common, ceremonial, and military objects were ornamented heavily. Techniques such as etching, engraving, and inlaying and the use of metal beading helped to create patterns of interweaving tendrils, "gripping beasts", and stylized limbs.

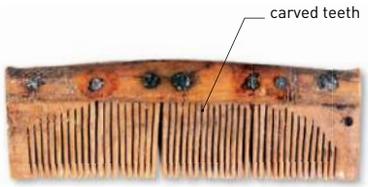
Wooden shield
Shields were made from spruce, fir, pine, or linden wood with iron handles behind an iron boss. They were painted with bright colours and often had intricate designs.

Axe
Axes were commonly used by poor Vikings, as they were cheaper than swords. This Danish axe has a metal blade and a wooden haft.

Sword
Swords were rare and extremely valuable for the Vikings. This sword could be easily drawn out from its sheath and wielded with one hand.

Silver brooch/pin
This gold-coated silver brooch or cloak pin from Sweden is highlighted with niello, a black metallic compound.

Buckle plate
This metal plate was fixed to a Viking's leather belt so that it could be buckled. It has two sections, one for each end of the belt.



Hair comb
A typical Viking grooming kit included a comb, tweezers, and scoops for cleaning ears. This wooden comb has a handle secured with iron rivets.

Brooch
This box brooch (top view), from Martens on the Swedish island of Gotland, is decorated with four squatting human figures in gold.

Gilded weather vane
Weather vanes were originally mounted on the prows of ships and later on the tops of churches. This gilded weather vane was found in Sweden.

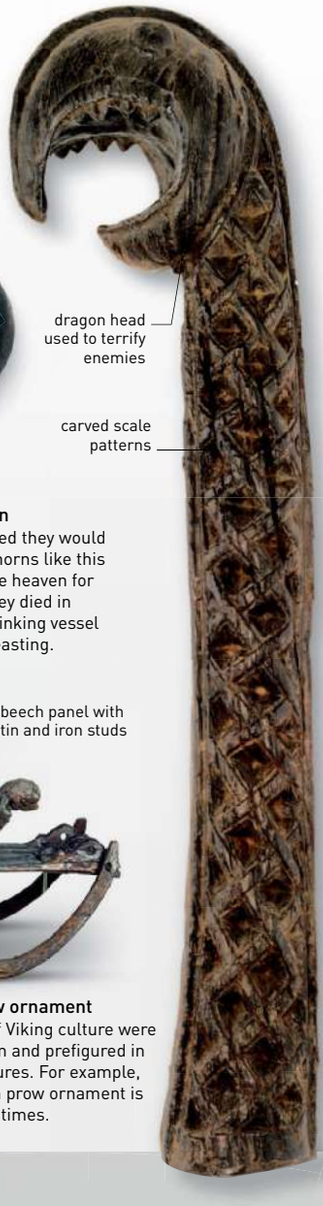
Helmet
Made from iron plates welded together over a leather cap, this Norwegian helmet has an attached face guard, complete with nose protector.

Early Danish coins
Originally, the Vikings used looted coins, hack silver (chunks), and barter in place of their own money. King Harald Bluetooth started mass minting of coins in 975.

Trading weights
Found in Sweden, these brass-coated iron weights were used to measure quantities of goods and the value of hack silver.

Drinking horn
Vikings believed they would use drinking horns like this in Valhalla, the heaven for warriors, if they died in battle. This drinking vessel was used in feasting.

Sledge
This oak-and-beech sledge is from a ship burial at Oseberg in Norway. It has finely carved runners and animal heads on each corner post of the box.



Ship's prow ornament
Elements of Viking culture were derived from and prefigured in earlier cultures. For example, this wooden prow ornament is from Saxon times.

951–960

This detail from the "Gateway of the Sun", a great stone doorway at Tiwanaku, is carved with a figure known as the Staff God.

THE PRE-INCA, ANDEAN CIVILIZATION OF TIWANAKU declined precipitously in the second half of the 10th century. Sophisticated agricultural and irrigation techniques (see 741–50) had allowed Tiwanaku to support a **population** of up to 60,000 people, with up to **1.4 million** in the wider region, according to some estimates. A **prolonged drought** is believed to have been responsible for its **decline** and archaeological evidence suggests that the main city was abandoned as citizens retreated to smaller, rural settlements, and returned to a pre-urban lifestyle.

The **establishment of the Song dynasty** in China brought an end to the anarchy and warfare of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms era (see 901–10). Known as the **Northern Song** in its early stages because the capital was at Kaifeng in northern China, the dynasty was founded by **Zhao Kuangyin** (r.960-76), who was a general under the Late Zhou, the last of the Five Dynasties. He dealt with the threat from external states such as the Khitan Liao (see 901–10), the Tangut kingdom of Xia Xia, a confederation of Tibetan tribes, and conquered several of the Ten Kingdoms to the south. Zhao used the civil service examination system to assert control over the military, and centralize power.

Emperor Otto I, "the Great" (912–73), defeated the **Magyars** at the **Battle of Lechfeld** in 955. Since being displaced by **Byzantine–Bulgar conflict** (see 891–900), the Magyars had raided Frankish territories, reaching as far west as Aquitaine in 951. The son of Henry I (see 911–20), Otto vigorously asserted royal authority from his coronation in 936, gaining control of all the East Frankish duchies. His powerful army **ended the Magyar menace** and also defeated the **Wends** – tribes on the eastern border engaged in a long struggle to resist Frankish **colonization and Christianization**.

Bronze Mirror
This intricately decorated mirror from the Song dynasty illustrates the artistic sophistication of China in this period.

961–970

This detail from the imperial crown of Otto I shows the biblical figure, King Solomon, holding a scroll.

Viking sea routes
By the late 10th century, Viking seafarers had penetrated to every corner of Europe and beyond, reaching as far as Greenland in the north.

KEY
→ Viking expansionist exploration 8–10th centuries

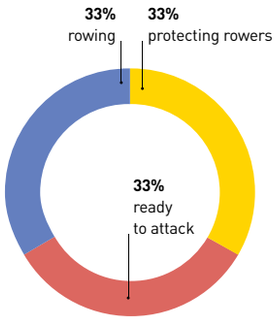
THE POPE'S IMPERIAL CORONATION OF OTTO I as emperor in 962, revived the **Carolingian Roman Empire** in the West. In 961, Otto made an expedition to Italy in response to a plea for protection from Pope John XII, and in Pavia he had assumed the Italian crown. The following year he went to **Rome** to receive the imperial crown and assert his authority over the fractious papacy. His son was crowned co-emperor as Otto II in 967.

In 965, **King of Denmark, Harald Bluetooth**, converted to Christianity, and the **religion** spread rapidly through the Nordic region. Denmark had been forced to accept missionaries as the consequence of defeat by the East Frankish king, Henry I, in 933. Further afield, Vikings continued to prosper as they penetrated into all parts of Europe.

The **death of** Byzantine emperor **Constantine VII** in 963 brought his infant son **Basil II** (958–1025) to the throne. In practice, authority was assumed by the general **Nicephorus Phocas**. As **Nicephorus II** (r.963–969), he continued the restoration of the empire that had begun with the reconquest of Crete in 961, regaining Cyprus and Cilicia in 965, subduing the Bulgars in 966–69, and invading northern Syria in 969. That same year he was assassinated by his nephew, **John Tzimisces**.

971–980

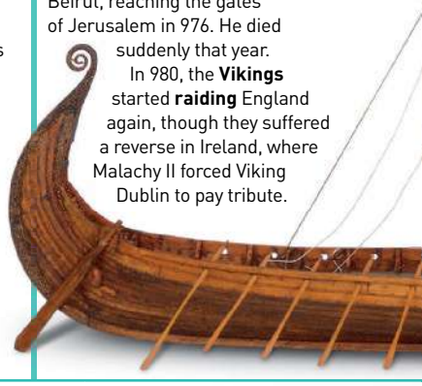
> **"A RECKLESS MAN** BY NATURE [WHO]… ATTEMPTED UNUSUAL DEEDS"
>
> **Leo the Deacon on John Tzimisces,** late 10th century



Longboat crew in battle
By keeping part of the crew at the oars Viking raiding parties maintained an aggressive posture without sacrificing mobility.

DURING HIS SHORT REIGN, JOHN TZIMISCES, nephew of Nicephorus II (see 961–70), won a string of victories. Having fought off a revolt by general Bardas Phocas in 971, Tzimisces crushed a campaign by the **Kievan Rus** leader, Sviatoslav, and **conquered Bulgaria** as far as the Danube. In 972, he campaigned in the East, taking Edessa, Damascus, and Beirut, reaching the gates of Jerusalem in 976. He died suddenly that year.

In 980, the **Vikings** started **raiding** England again, though they suffered a reverse in Ireland, where Malachy II forced Viking Dublin to pay tribute.



c.950 Abandonment of **Tiwanaku**
951 Emperor **Otto I** of East Francia invades Italy
951 Magyars raid as far west as Aquitaine
954 Construction of **Hindu Lakshmana temple** at Khajuraho in central India
955 Battle of Lechfeld; Otto I defeats Magyars, who cease raiding and settle in Hungary
957 Byzantine general **Nicephorus Phocas** takes the city of Hadath, continuing Byzantine advance in Syria
958 Byzantine **victory at Raban** in Syria
960 Founding of **Northern Song dynasty, China**
962 Otto I crowned emperor in Rome
962 Ghaznavid dynasty founded in present-day Afghanistan
963 Death of Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII (b.905); general Nicephorus Phocas becomes Emperor **Nicephorus II**
965 Khazars destroyed by Kievan Rus
965 King Harald Bluetooth of Denmark converts to Christianity
967 Otto II crowned co-emperor to Otto I
969 Byzantine general **John Tzimisces** assassinates his uncle to become emperor
969 Fatimids conquer Egypt
969 First playing cards used in China
c.970 *Beowulf* first written down
972 Bulgar Khanate annexed by Byzantine Empire
973 Death of **Otto I** (b.912)
973 Taila II overthrows the Rashtrakuta dynasty of central India, establishing the **Chalukya dynasty**
975 Beginnings of Hungarian state under **Duke Geisa**, who converts to Roman Catholicism
980 Vizier Al-Mansur becomes true power in **Cordoba** after death of al-Hakam II

Venice's modern splendour is the result of control of the lucrative trade routes between Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the East in the 10th century.

IN 981, THE ISLAMIC FORCES OF CORDOBA defeated the Christian kingdom of **Leon** in Spain, under the leadership of **Al-Mansur**. "Al-Mansur" was the honorific title taken by Muhammad ibn Abi' Amir, the powerful and energetic vizier who was the true power behind the **Umayyad** throne (see 911–20). He campaigned successfully against Leon, Navarre, and Catalonia, making their kings subordinate to the caliphate, and extended Umayyad control to Africa via campaigns in **Mauretania** (modern-day Morocco and part of Algeria).

In 986, the Viking explorer, **Eric the Red**, led a party of Icelandic colonists to the shores of the bleak landmass he misleadingly named "Greenland" in the hope of attracting settlers. He succeeded in recruiting 24 boatloads of men, women, and children willing to entrust their lives to Viking longboats, and brave the perilous crossing. Only 14 ships arrived, but they quickly established a thriving colony that may have eventually numbered around 5,000 people.

Otto II, the emperor and king of East Francia, died of malaria in 983 after an expedition to southern Italy. Although his infant son, **Otto III** (r.983–1001), managed to hold on to the crown thanks to the strong regency of his mother, Theophano, the East Franks were also faced with an uprising among the **Wends**, the forcibly converted Slavic tribes on the eastern border. The Wends restored their pagan religion and resisted Frankish colonization for nearly two centuries.

In 987, **Toltec** forces conquered the Yucatán Maya and made **Chichen Itza** the **capital** of a Toltec–Maya state. According to the early Mayan chronicle *Chilam Balam*, Chichen Itza was conquered by Toltecs led by Kukulcan, the Mayan name for the Toltec god Quetzlcoatl or "the feathered serpent" – possibly the exiled Toltec king, Topiltzin. Despite the record in the chronicle, however, archaeological findings suggest that the city collapsed around this time.

By the end of the 10th century, the mercantile powers of **Venice** and **Genoa** were beginning to dominate the Adriatic and Tyhrrenian seas respectively. Venice, in particular, enjoyed lucrative trade links with the Byzantine Empire.

Al-Mansur
This 17th century oil painting depicts Al Mansur, or Almanzor to his Christian subordinates. Al Mansur means "the Victorious".

Viking longboat
Considered by some to be the greatest technical achievement of the early medieval era, the Viking longboat combined river, close-to-shore, and ocean-going capacity.

TOLTECS

The Toltecs, who ruled a state centred on Tula in modern-day Mexico, were notable for their aggressive militarism, which changed society in Central America, paving the way for militaristic states such as the Aztec. The term "Toltec" came to mean "city-dweller" or "civilized person", but its literal meaning is "reed person" – signifying an inhabitant of Tollan ("Place of the Reeds", the city now known as Tula). Toltec art and architecture, characterized by monumental masonry and giant statues, was greatly influential in the region.

10,000 KILOGRAMS THE WEIGHT IN SILVER OF THE DANEGELD IN 991

IN 991, A FORCE OF ANGLO-SAXON WARRIORS made a stand against a much larger army of Vikings at the **Battle of Maldon** in East Anglia, England. They were slaughtered. The English king, **Aethelred II, "the Unready"** (r.978–1016), was forced to pay a tribute known as the **Danegeld**, to buy off further incursions.

Byzantine emperor **Basil II** launched the first of a long series of **campaigns against** his greatest enemy, the **Bulgarian tsar** Samuel, in 996. Basil had won major victories in Syria the year before, but it took him nearly 20 years to finally defeat the Bulgarians.

From around 1000, the inhabitants of **Easter Island**, or **Rapa Nui** – an island in the Pacific Ocean – began to carve monumental statues known as *moai*. Thought to represent ancestors and to channel *mana* – spiritual energy – the cult of *moai* consumed the Easter Islanders to the point where they may have fatally compromised their environment – setting them on the path to ecological disaster.

981 Al-Mansur subjugates Leon, Spain
981 Annam repulses the Northern Song
982 Dai Viet Kingdom destroys Champa capital
983 Death of Otto II (b.955)
983 Fatimids control Palestine, Syria
983 Great Wend Rebellion against East Francian expansion
984 Oldest surviving **astrolabe** made in Isfahan
986 Norse settlement of **Greenland**
987 Capetian dynasty founded in France by Hugh Capet
987 Toltec Kukulcan conquers Yucatán Maya and makes Chichen Itza his capital
988 Byzantine emperor Basil II defeats rebel general Bardas Phocas with help of "**Varangians**" (Russian Vikings) sent by Prince Vladimir of Kievan Rus
988 Al-Mansur overruns Leon
c.990 Italian trading city-states **Genoa and Venice** flourish
991 Battle of Maldon, English monarchs forced to pay Danegeld for first time
996 Otto III crowned emperor
1000 North Vietnamese **Dai-Viet** invade south Vietnamese Champa
1000 Boleslav crowned first king of Poland
c.1000 Easter Island *moai* start to be erected

1001 – 1010

These ruins at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, reveal one of more than a dozen Great Houses constructed by the Anasazi.

AROUND 1000, THE ANCIENT PUEBLO CIVILIZATION centred on Chaco Canyon in southwest North America reached its climax. The **Anasazi** used sophisticated dryland agriculture and hydrology to thrive in the arid environment, and controlled trade routes that extended as far as the Pacific coast of present-day California and the Valley of Mexico. They achieved **impressive feats of architecture**, most notably the construction of Great Houses such as Pueblo Bonito, one of 13 such buildings in Chaco Canyon. Pueblo Bonito was six stories high and comprised more than 600 rooms. It probably functioned as a ceremonial centre, storage depot, and elite residence. Well-maintained roads – some with stone kerbs – connected Chaco Canyon to thousands of smaller Anasazi settlements across the region. The canyon itself may have been home to as many as 10,000 people, and this set the Anasazi on a collision course with the fragile ecology of the region (see 1161–65).

Mahmud of Ghazni (*c.*971–1030) was a Muslim intent on **spreading the faith into India**. In 1001, at Peshawar, he defeated Jaipal, raja of Punjab, who then committed suicide.

Probably the **first European to set foot on North America**, Leif Ericson landed in a place he called **Vinland** in around 1002. Shortly after this discovery, Greenlanders under Thorfinn Karlsefni tried to **establish a colony**, spending three winters there. The remains of settlements at L' Anse aux Meadows, in northern Newfoundland, attest to Viking presence in North America.

LEIF ERICSON (970–1020)

Leif was the son of Eric the Red, founder of the Greenland colony (see 981–990). Stories differ on the exact details of his discovery of North America. According to one account, he was returning from a visit to Norway in 1002, where he had been converted to Christianity, and was blown off course, landing at the place he called Vinland because of the grapes growing there. Another account suggests that he aimed for a land sighted to the west by an Icelandic trader.

1011 – 1020

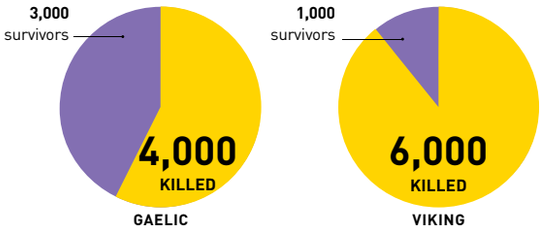
One of the greatest but cruellest Byzantine emperors, Basil II became emperor in 976. Aged 20, he ruled for nearly 50 years.

MURASAKI SHIKIBU (LADY MURASAKI) wrote the novel *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) in instalments between 1011 and 1021. It is regarded as the **first Japanese novel**, and possibly the first psychological novel in world literature.

In 1014, **Brian Boru, High King of Ireland** and self-styled Emperor of the Gael, defeated a coalition of Dublin Vikings and Celtic Leinstermen at Clontarf, in Ireland. Although the Norse kingdom was crushed and Viking incursions into Ireland halted, Brian Boru was killed in the battle and his **dream of a united Irish kingdom** fell apart thereafter.

In 1014, at the culmination of an 18-year war (see 991–1000), the **Byzantine emperor Basil II** defeated the armies of the Bulgarian tsar at Belasita. Earning the name Bulgaroktonos (Bulgar Slayer), he put out the eyes of 15,000 captured warriors before sending them home. Basil's arch-enemy, Samuel the Bulgarian, was said to have died of shock. By the end of the decade the Bulgarians finally submitted to **Byzantine annexation**.

Lady Murasaki
A scene from a 16th century hanging scroll depicts author Lady Murasaki. Of noble birth, she chronicled the affairs of the Heian court.



The bloody Battle of Clontarf
Fought between the largest armies yet assembled in Ireland, the Battle of Clontarf was a bloody affair. Up to 4,000 Gaels and up to 6,000 Norse and their allies were killed.

1021 – 1030

The Brihadishvara temple was built by the Cholas in their capital Tanjore.

IN 1025, THE CHOLA KING RAJENDRA CHOLADEVRA launched an audacious naval expedition against the maritime empire of Srivijaya in Sumatra, also sacking the Pegu kingdom in Burma. Rajendra had inherited a strong kingdom from his father, Rajaraja I, who had conquered Sri Lanka and instituted a programme of **Hindu temple building** centred on the Chola capital of Tanjore. Under Rajendra, the Cholas expanded their kingdom to include Bengal, and shattered the power of Srivijaya, securing control of the **lucrative Indian-Chinese trade routes**.

Cnut (also known as Canute) was the son of Sven Forkbeard, king of Denmark and Norway, who had **invaded England** and driven the Anglo-Saxon king, Aethelred II, into exile in Normandy in 1013. After staging his own successful invasion in 1015, Cnut was accepted as overlord of all England in 1016, and went on to expand his empire. By 1030, it included Norway, Denmark, and the Faroe, Shetland, and Orkney islands.

Chola sculpture of Shiva
The Cholas were staunch Hindus and enthusiastic temple builders. Shiva, one of the major Hindu deities, is depicted here as a young and handsome man.

c.1000 Height of **Chaco Canyon Anasazi**
c.1000 Great age of **Chinese ceramics** begins
1001 Mahmud of Ghazni conquers Punjab
1002 Death of **Otto III**; Henry II claims German crown
1009 Completion of **Siva temple** in Tanjore
1010 Founding of **Ly Dynasty** of Vietnamese kingdom of Dai-co-viet

1001 Stephen becomes the first King of **Hungary**
1002 Leif Ericson discovers Vinland
1003 Brian Boru becomes High King of **Ireland**
1003 Byzantine emperor **Basil II** defeats the Bulgarian tsar Samuel
1009 Mahmud of Ghazni conquers Ghur in Afghanistan
1010 Khitans ravage Korea
c.1010 Persian poet **Firdausi** completes *Shah-nama* (*The Book of Kings*)

1013 Boleslaw the Brave of Poland pays homage to Henry II (the **Peace of Merseberg**)
1014 Henry II crowned Emperor
1016 Cnut establishes overlordship over all England
1016 Norman adventurers active in southern Italy

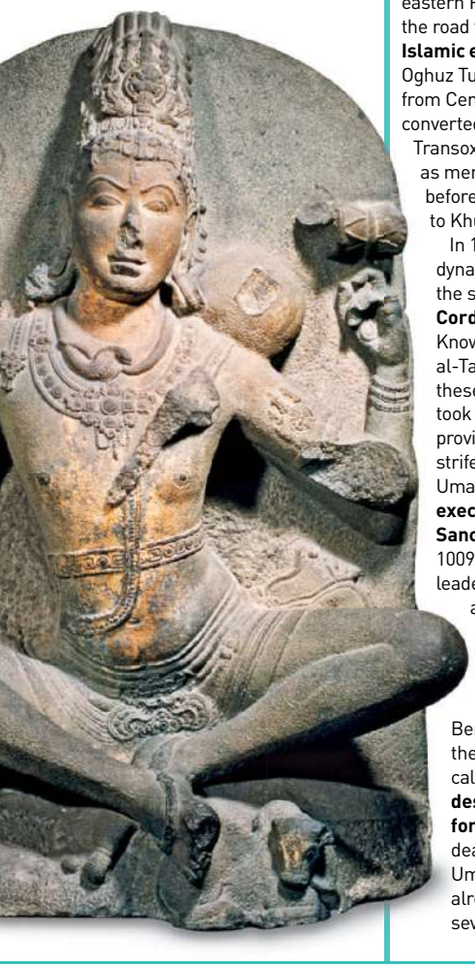
1013 Sven Forkbeard of Denmark conquers England
1014 Battle of Clontarf breaks Viking dominion in Ireland
1014 Cnut becomes king of England
1014 Basil II blinds Bulgarian army
1018 Rajendra Chola conquers Sri Lanka
1018 Celibacy introduced for Roman Catholic priests
1019 Jaroslav defeats his brother to become Grand Duke of Kievan Rus

1021 St Vitus' Dance epidemic, affecting the nervous system, sweeps Europe
1022 Suppression of the **Bogomil heresy**; Roman Catholic Church begins practice of burning heretics

1022 Avicenna's *Book of Healing* written
1024 Boleslaw the Brave crowned king of Poland, dies the following year

1031 – 1040

A wise and capable king, Cnut managed conciliation between his Danish and Anglo-Saxon subjects. He collected Danegeld (Danish tax) to pay for a standing navy and army – an important innovation.



The Seljuks are shown here battling the Byzantines, having already conquered Persia.

IN 1037, THE SELJUKS, UNDER CHAGRI BEG AND HIS BROTHER TUGHRIL BEG, invaded Khurasan in Persia. In 1040, they crushed the Ghaznavids at the Battle of Dandanqan, winning control of eastern Persia, the first step on the road to creating a **new Islamic empire**. The Seljuks were Oghuz Turks, originally nomads from Central Asia who had converted to Islam and moved to Transoxiana where they served as mercenaries in the region, before turning their attentions to Khurasan.

In 1031, 40 lesser dynasties were founded on the shattered remnants of the **Cordoba caliphate**, in Spain. Known as the Muluk al-Tawa'if ("Party Kings"), these short-lived dynasties took control of different provinces of Cordoba after the strife that brought down the Umayyads following the **execution of Abd al-Rahman Sanchol**, son of al-Mansur, in 1009. He was the last capable leader of the caliphate but his attempt to move out from behind the throne and take the crown led to his downfall.

Subsequently, the Berber faction nominated their own candidate for caliph and **Cordoba descended into civil war for 22 years**. In 1031, the death of Hisham III, the last Umayyad caliph, who had already lost control of several provinces, led to the final break up of the caliphate, with the **Abbadids** seizing Seville, the **Jahwarids** taking Cordoba and the **Hudids** seizing Saragossa. With the **Islamic state in disarray** the Christian kingdoms to the north were encouraged to expand southwards.

Sancho III of Navarre, who had conquered Castile and was overlord of Christian Spain, died in 1035, and his kingdoms were divided between his two sons. **Ferdinand inherited Castile**, and in 1037 he killed his brother-in-law, the king of Leon and made himself emperor there in 1039. He went on to conquer Navarre and impose serfdom on parts of Muslim Spain and Portugal.

King and Emperor
Ferdinand I was the first ruler of Castile to call himself king. He added the title of emperor after his conquest of Leon.

1041 – 1050

Between 1041 and 1048, Bi Sheng invented the first moveable type printing system, using clay letters held in wax within an iron frame.

BANTU IS A FAMILY OF LANGUAGES that originated in the Bantu homeland (now southern Nigeria and northwestern Cameroon). Bantu-speaking people spread from here to the east and south and Bantu became the **dominant language family in sub-Saharan Africa**, although whether this indicates conquest, colonization, or simply cultural influence is less clear. The Bantu expansion started in the Late Stone Age, accelerating as the Bantu speakers acquired iron technology and cattle-husbandry skills. By the mid-11th century, Bantu tribes had become **sophisticated pastoralists**, able to sustain high population densities and complex social and economic networks. This in turn led to the emergence of chiefdoms, and Bantu speakers dominated Central and southern Africa.

In 1044, Anawrata seized power in the **Pagan kingdom in Burma**. His military prowess and skilful use of Hinayana Buddhism as a cultural and political driver made Pagan the centre of Burmese politics, culture, and religion. He developed Burmese as a written language, instituted a programme of building, and forged trade and cultural links to India and China.

In China, sometime between 1041 and 1048, the commoner Bi (or Pi) Sheng invented the **first moveable type system**. Block printing had been in use in China for centuries, and since the Later Tang dynasty (923–36) had been used for most book production, but Bi Sheng introduced the innovation of using **tiny clay blocks** – one for each character. The characters were moulded on the ends of thin rods of wet clay, which were fired to harden them. Unlike wood, this clay type did not distort when wet and could be used over and over again.

KEY
- Bantu homeland 2000 BCE
- Spread of Bantu

Bantu expansion
From their homeland in the border region of southern Nigeria and northwestern Cameroon, Bantu speaking people spread east and south, through the tropical forest, eventually spreading to all parts of central and southern Africa.

1025 Cholas sack Srivijaya and establish a maritime empire
1025 Death of **Basil II** (b.958)
1028 **Sancho III** unites Navarre and Castile
1029 Cholas are expelled from Sri Lanka
1030 Death of **Mahmud of Ghazni** (b.971)
1030 **Cnut's empire** expands to include Denmark and Norway
1031 Break-up of the **Cordoba caliphate**
1033 Ferdinand becomes **King of Castile**
1035 **Kingdom of Aragon** established
1035 Death of **Cnut the Great** (born c.985)
1035 William (the Conqueror) becomes **Duke of Normandy**
1037 Ferdinand conquers **Leon**
1037 **Rouen Cathedral** constructed
1037 Seljuk Turks invade **Khourasan** (Persia)
1038 **Tibetan revolt** against the Northern Song
1039 **Henry III** elected emperor
1040 King Duncan killed by **Macbeth** in Scotland
1040 **Seljuks** conquer Ghaznavid Persia
c.1040 **Bantu expansion** climaxes in South Africa
1042 Byzantine emperor **Michael V** deposed, blinded, and succeeded by Theodora and Zoe; period of intrigue and instability in Byzantine Empire
1042 **Edward the Confessor** becomes king of England
1044 Rise of **Pagan kingdom** in Burma under Anawrata
1044 Earliest recorded recipe for **gunpowder** in China
1046 After Benedict IX sells the papacy, Henry III oversees the **Deposition of the Three Popes**
c.1045 **Moveable type** invented in China
1048 Seljuk Turks sack **Erzerum** in Anatolia
1050 Edward the Confessor orders rebuilding of **Westminster Abbey, England**
1050 Seljuk Turks conquer **Isfahan**
c.1050 **Mabinogion** (book of Welsh legends) is compiled

1051–60

Labanga Mosque in Ghana is possibly the oldest mosque in sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana was Islamicized by the Almoravids in the 11th century.

IN MOROCCO, IN 1054, A FIREBRAND CLERIC NAMED IBN YASIN inspired the unification of Saharan tribal groups.The confederation – known as the **Almoravids**, from the Arabic "al-Murabitun" ("people of the frontier garrisons") – **built an empire** that would eventually encompass much of northwestern Africa and Muslim Spain (see 1081–90). In 1056, the Almoravids began the **Islamic conquest of West Africa**, where a number of powerful states had arisen, including that of Ghana.

Yoruba was the name given by outsiders to a group of **city-states in Nigeria** that shared a common language and culture. The oldest and most prestigious Yoruba kingdom was **Ife**, where a **sophisticated urban culture** was well established by the mid-11th century. Ife was the spiritual and mythical centre of the Yoruba, but its poor location meant that it never exerted wide-ranging military or political control over the other Yoruba states. Ife is most famous for its artistic achievements, most notably **terracotta and bronze heads**.

In 1059, Pope Nicholas II recognized **Robert Guiscard** the Norman as Duke of **Apulia** and **Calabria**, and Count of **Sicily** – territories under Byzantine and Arab control – legitimizing his attempts to conquer them.

Ife bronze head
This head probably dates from the 14th century, but it represents an artistic tradition stretching back to the 11th century that was at least as sophisticated as any in contemporary Europe.

1061–70

In this detail from the Bayeux Tapestry, completed in 1080, William the Conqueror exhorts his troops to prepare themselves for battle.

IN 1066, AT THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS, William Duke of Normandy (*c.*1028–87) defeated Harold Godwinson (*c.*1022–66), the last Anglo-Saxon king of England. England had fallen into the Norman orbit earlier, with **Edward the Confessor** spending his youth in exile at the Norman court while Cnut (see 1021–30) ruled England. William claimed that Edward had promised him the English crown, but when Edward died, in 1066, **Harold was elected king**. He marched north to defeat a Norse invasion, before dashing south to Hastings to face William, where **he was killed and his army shattered**. William the Conqueror quickly took southeast England, then the southwest, and suppressed a great uprising in the north in 1069.

Under their leader **Tughril Beg**, the Seljuks had occupied Baghdad and **ended the Buwayhid dynasty** (see 931–50), retaining the Abbasid caliph as a figurehead but giving him the title of sultan. Tughril Beg died in 1063; his successor Alp Arslan **extended Seljuk dominion** into Anatolia, Armenia, and Syria.

2:1 **Battle of Hastings**
Anglo-Saxon casualties outnumbered Norman losses by two-to-one, thanks in part to their forced march from the north, and the advanced Norman tactics.

1071–80

INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY

Which was greater: secular or religious authority? This was the question at the heart of the Investiture Controversy. This 12th-century manuscript illumination shows Henry IV requesting mediation from Matilda of Tuscany and Hugh of Cluny. Matilda was one of the most powerful women of the Middle Ages. It was her stronghold of Canossa where Henry made his penitence.

SINCE CHARLEMAGNE'S CORONATION BY THE POPE (see 791–800), the Western emperors had considered it their divine right to appoint – or invest – bishops. Emperors had derived great income and power through their **dispensation of religious offices**, and Emperor Henry III (1017–56) had gone further still, in 1046, insisting that it was the **emperor's right** to appoint the pope. **Pope Gregory VII** represented the opposite view; he held that only popes had the right to invest clerics. In 1075, at the Lent synod, Gregory issued a decree forbidding lay investiture. The emperor, **Henry IV** (1050–1106), who was fighting to reduce the power of German prelates, defied the decree. In 1076, Gregory **excommunicated** him, absolving his subjects of their oaths of loyalty and triggering a **rebellion by Saxon nobles against the king**. In 1077, Henry IV crossed the Alps in the dead of winter and appeared at Canossa, dressed as a penitent, to submit to the pope (see panel, above). He was absolved but controversy quickly flared up again, with a rival, **Rudolf of Swabia**, being elected to the German (formerly East Frankish) throne. In 1080, Henry had a rival pope elected, while Gregory allied himself with **Roger Guiscard**, Count of Sicily, against the imperial camp.

In 1071, the **Seljuks crushed the Byzantine army** at Manzikert, capturing and ransoming Emperor Romanus IV and going on to conquer Anatolia (present-day Turkey). This began its transformation into a **Muslim Turkish region**. In 1077, the Seljuks established the **Sultanate of Rum** there, while other conquests brought them Syria and Jerusalem.

1054 Founding of **Almoravid dynasty**; start of Islamic conquest of West Africa

1054 Schism between Eastern (Byzantine) and Western Churches

1055 Gruffydd ap Llywelyn becomes king of all Wales

1057 Death of **Macbeth**, king of Scotland (b.1005)

1059 Treaty of Melfi: Pope makes **Robert Guiscard** the Norman titular ruler of southern Italy and Sicily

1055 Death of Jaroslav leads to civil strife in **Kievan Rus**

1055 Seljuk Turks take Baghdad, ending Buwayhid dynasty

1057 Expansion of **Pagan kingdom** in Burma

1062 Almoravid kingdom establishes capital at Marrakech

1065 Seljuk Turks invade **Transoxiana and Syria**

1068 Dai-co-viet defeats Champa in Vietnam

1066 Battle of Hastings: Norman conquest of England

1069 The Harrying of the North: **Normans** ravage northern England

1070 Cholas expelled from Sri Lanka

1071 Normans complete **conquest** of Byzantine southern Italy

1071 Battle of Manzikert, Seljuks control most of Anatolia and Syria; soon take Jerusalem

1071 Rebellion of **Hereward the Wake** against Norman rule in England

1075 Start of **Investiture Controversy** between emperor and pope

1076 Almoravids forcibly convert **Ghana Empire** to Islam

1077 Penitence of **Henry IV** at Canossa

1077 Seljuks establish **Sultanate of Rum** in Anatolia

1077 Alfonso proclaims himself **emperor of Spain**

1080 Bayeux Tapestry completed

1081–90

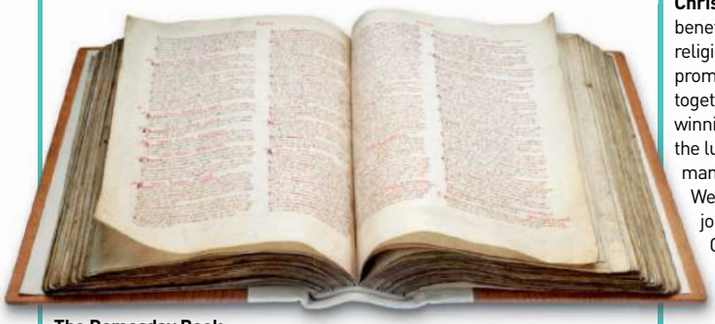
Hassan-i Sabbah leads initiations at Alamut, in an illustration from Marco Polo's 13th-century *Travels*.

IN 1090, A GROUP OF ISMAILI SHI'ITES BECAME INVOLVED IN A DISPUTE over the Fatimid succession in Cairo (see 901–10). Under the leadership of the charismatic **Hassan-i Sabbah**, this group recognized the claims of an infant called Nizar, and were therefore known as **Nizari Ismailis**. Forced to flee Cairo, Hassan led the Nizaris to his homeland in Persia where they captured a fortress known as **Alamut** in the mountainous region of Kazvin and made it the base of a de facto **Nizari kingdom**. Thus was born the group later known as the **Assassins** – a name derived from the word "hashashins", a label applied by their enemies who claimed they used intoxicants such as hashish to brainwash devotees into blind obedience.

Alarmed by the advances of **Alfonso VI of Castile**, the **Abbadids** (see 1031) summoned the **Almoravids** from North Africa to defend against the Christian threat. Defeating Alfonso at Zallaka in 1086, they annexed most of Islamic Spain.

In 1085, **William the Conqueror** (see 1061) commissioned a survey of his new kingdom – known as the **Domesday Book** – probably to regulate military service and assess taxation opportunities.

13 THOUSAND THE NUMBER OF PLACES LISTED IN THE **DOMESDAY BOOK**



The Domesday Book
Nicknamed "Domesday" in reflection of the trepidation that the great undertaking inspired in the native English, William's survey actually comprised two manuscripts; the Great and Little Domesday.

1091–1100

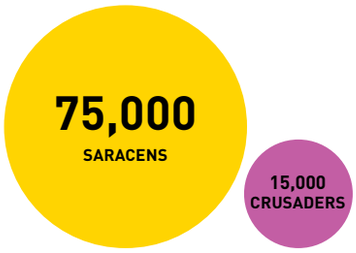
> **"** LET SUCH AS ARE GOING TO **FIGHT FOR CHRISTIANITY** PUT THE FORM OF **THE CROSS** UPON THEIR GARMENTS **THAT THEY** MAY **OUTWARDLY DEMONSTRATE** THEIR DEVOTION TO THEIR **INWARD FAITH.** **"**
>
> **Pope Urban II**, 1095

IN 1092, CHINESE POLYMATH SU SUNG DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED A COSMIC ENGINE. This mechanical astronomical clock was 9m (30ft) high, and was water-driven with an armillary sphere, which showed the position of celestial objects.

In 1094, a Castilian who had served both Christian and Islamic Masters, Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, known by the Moors as **El Cid** ("the lord"), captured Valencia in eastern Spain and established himself as ruler.

At the **Council of Clermont** in 1095, Pope Urban, a French Cluniac (see 910), preached to an assembly of mainly Frankish clerics and nobles about Muslim "defilement" of the Holy Land, urging his audience to take up arms in a **holy war**. Urban had been entreated by the Byzantines for help against the Seljuks, and saw a way to channel the energies of European nobility away from constant in-fighting and towards a **Christian expansion** that would benefit the papacy. Fired by religious zeal and spurred by the promise of remission of sins, together with the prospect of winning booty, land, and control of the lucrative trade with the Orient, many nobles of France (formerly West Francia) and Lorraine joined, or "took the cross". Other nations were either in conflict with the papacy or indifferent, so the **First Crusade** was a largely French affair. Taking advantage of disarray in the Muslim world, three groups of Crusaders under Godfrey and Baldwin of Bouillon, Count Raymond of Toulouse, and the Norman Bohemond of Otranto, took the Seljuk Rum capital of **Nicaea** in 1097, conquered **Edessa** in the same year, captured **Antioch** in 1098, and marched on **Jerusalem** in 1099. Godfrey was elected king of Jerusalem but took the title **Defender of the Holy Sepulchre**; his brother, Baldwin became king the following year. Under the overlordship of the King of Jerusalem, the Crusaders established **four principal states**: the kingdom of Jerusalem, which thrived on trade mediated by the Italian trading powers; the county of Tripoli, set up by Raymond; the county of Edessa, established by Baldwin; and the principality of Antioch, set up by Bohemund.

Battle of the Crusades
This manuscript illustration shows Crusader knights joining battle with Saracens – the generic term used by Europeans to refer to their Muslim foes. Around 30,000 knights took part in the First Crusade.



The Siege of Antioch
Islamic forces at the Siege of Antioch outnumbered the Crusaders considerably. In fact Antioch fell only when a traitor opened a gate to a party of knights led by Bohemond of Otranto.

1081 Alexis Comnenius accedes to Byzantine throne
1084 Founding of Carthusian monastic order
1085 Alfonso VI takes Toledo and Valencia in Spain
1085 Domesday Book commissioned
1085 Death of Pope Gregory VII (born c.1020)
c.1085 Thule Eskimos control North American Arctic
1086 Battle of Zallaka in Spain – Alfonso defeated by Almoravids
1089 Development of Romanesque style
1089 Fatimids take Palestine
c.1090 Assassins take up residence in Alamut
1092 Normans complete conquest of Sicily
1092 Su Sung builds Cosmic Engine mechanical clock in Peking
1092 Death of Seljuk sultan Malik Shah; Seljuk Empire begins to break up
1094 El Cid takes Valencia
1095 Pope Urban proclaims First Crusade
1096 Construction of Basilica San Marco, Venice
1097 Crusaders sack Constantinople
1098 Antioch falls to Crusaders after year-long siege
1098 Founding of the Cistercian order
1098 Council of Bari: attempt to reunify Eastern and Western Churches
1099 Crusaders take Jerusalem: end of the First Crusade
1099 Knights Hospitaller established
1099 Death of El Cid (b. 1043)
1100 William II killed in hunting accident, Henry I becomes king of England
1100 Baldwin I becomes first king of Jerusalem
1100 Euclid translated from Arabic into Latin by Adelard of Bath

1101–05

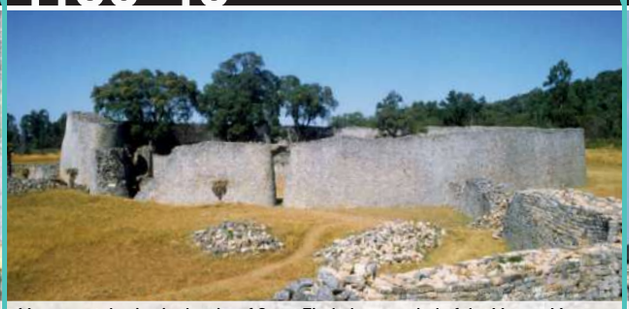
An illustration from Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat*; of the 600 verses, only around 120 are thought to have been written by Khayyam himself.

SOMETIME AROUND THE START OF THE 12TH CENTURY, OMAR KHAYYAM (1048–1131), an astronomer and mathematician in the service of the **Seljuk sultans**, composed a series of four-line poems, or "roba'iyat", which became famous thanks to the translation made by **Edward Fitzgerald** in 1859. Khayyam's career reflected the Seljuk era. At **Samarkand**, in the early 1070s, he was able to pursue his **mathematical studies** thanks to patronage from a local jurist, and under the strong Seljuk sultan **Malik Shah** (r.1072–92), Khayyam was invited to **Isfahan** in 1073 to **set up an observatory** and lead a team of top scholars. In this period he made many **mathematical and astronomical breakthroughs**, including an unprecedented accurate measurement of **the length of the year** to 12 decimal places. Although he is now most famous for the ***Rubaiyat***, it is not certain that Khayyam wrote most or any of the verses involved, and he was little regarded as a poet in his own time. Much of the current reputation of the work derives from the very free translation by Edward Fitzgerald.

The success of the **First Crusade** (see 1091–1100) owed much to the disarray of the Islamic regimes it had dispossessed. The **Fatimid Caliphate** in Cairo was rich but decadent; the **Abbasids** in Baghdad were little more than figureheads; the **Seljuk Turks** had failed to forge a unified empire, and instead warlords and tribal groups had set up a patchwork of competing states such as **Rum**, **Danishmend**, and **Damascus**. Throughout the early 12th century, the Crusaders battled constantly against these foes. In 1101, **Raymond IV of Toulouse** (c.1042–1105) led a new Crusader army from **Constantinople** against the Sultanate of Rum, taking **Ankara** in June, only to be destroyed by Danishmend Turks in August. **Baldwin I of Jerusalem** (c.1058–1118) steadily improved his access to the Mediterranean by taking a series of coastal cities from the **Fatimids**, defeating them at **Jaffa** in 1102, **Acre** in 1104, and **Ramleh** in 1105, although Raymond died in an attempt to take **Tripoli** in 1105.

Baldwin of Bourcq
This coin features Baldwin of Bourcq, cousin of Baldwin I who he succeeded as count of Edessa, then as king of Jerusalem (see 1118).

1106–10



Monumental ruins in the city of Great Zimbabwe, capital of the Mwene Mutapa Empire. After it seized control of the gold trade, the empire grew rich.

NOTED FOR ITS FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS and construction of **monumental temple mounds**, the post-Moche culture, known as the **Sicán** or **Lambayeque** on the northern coast of Peru, reached its height in the early 11th century. But a prolonged drought, followed by catastrophic flooding, led to **cultural and political collapse**. In the early 12th century, the state recovered from the convulsions of the 11th century and rebuilt around a new capital at **Túcume**. New temples were built and the capital flourished until its conquest by the **Chimú** (see 1375), by which time there were 26 mounds and accompanying enclosures.

In central southern Africa, in what is now Zimbabwe, the **Mwene Mutapa Empire**, also known as **Great Zimbabwe** after its monumental capital, emerged as the most significant regional power. A kingdom of the **Shona** peoples that emerged around 900, Mwene Mutapa was initially based on cattle herding, but from around 1100 it took control of the lucrative **trade routes** linking the gold, iron, and ivory production centres of the interior to the **Arab trading kingdoms** on the east coast, which offered luxury goods from Asia.

Ceremonial knife
This gold knife is from the Middle Sicán culture in Peru. The early 1100s mark the threshold between the Middle and Late Sicán cultures.

1111–15

The 12th-century Cathedral of St Nicholas at Novgorod, Russia.

THE 12TH CENTURY SAW AN EXPLOSION OF CATHEDRAL BUILDING all over Europe, as population growth, increased wealth, and architectural **advances** combined with religious zeal, **civic pride**, and the personal ambition of potentates. The development of the **Romanesque and Gothic styles** was given expression in the great cathedrals, but each region developed its own, distinctive idiom. In **Novgorod**, for instance, the **Cathedral of St Nicholas** (started in 1113) was given domed cupolas.

The **Investiture Controversy** between the papacy and the Western emperors rumbled on (see 1071–80). **Henry IV**'s failure to reconcile with the papacy had helped bring about his downfall; concerned that the ongoing dispute was undermining royal authority, his own family had conspired against him, and he was imprisoned. His successor, **Henry V** (1086–1125) launched a powerful expedition to **Italy** to force an **imperial coronation**. Under duress (he was a prisoner of Henry at the time), **Pope Paschal II** offered major concessions on the investiture issue in the **Treaty of Sutri**, but he repudiated them the following year and the issue remained unsettled (see 1122).

c.1100 Apogee of the **Mwene Mutapa Empire**, also known as Great Zimbabwe

c.1100 Omar Khayyam composes the *Rubaiyat*

1101 Raymond IV of Toulouse invades Sultanate of Rum but is defeated by Danishmend Turks

c.1105 Baldwin I defeats **Fatimids** at Ramleh

c.1102 Baldwin I, king of Jerusalem, defeats Fatimids at Jaffa

1105 Construction of the **Ananda Temple** in Burma

1106 Henry V becomes Emperor of Rome

1107 Sultan of Rum battles Seljuks of Persia

1107 Henry I of England makes peace with **Anselm**, Archbishop of Canterbury

1109 Fatimids surrender **Tripoli** to Baldwin

1109 On death of Alfonso VI of Castile and León, **Alfonso VII** of Aragon and Navarre begins to style himself "**Emperor of the Spains**"

1110 Bogomils, a religious sect, persecuted in Constantinople

1111 Imperial coronation of **Henry V** in Rome

1115 Raymond Berengar III, count of Barcelona, expels **Moors** from Balearics

1112 Start of reign of **Alaungsithu**; Burmese kingdom of **Pagan** reaches height

1115 Matilda of Tuscany dies (b.1046); **Florence** becomes a self-governing commune

1116–20

Stained glass window of a Templar Knight in Warwickshire, England.

1121–25

Guelph and Ghibelline forces join battle in Italy. These factions, based on the German Welf and Hohenstaufen dynasties, would come to dominate Italian politics.

> “IN THIS **RELIGIOUS ORDER** HAS **FLOURISHED** AND IS **REVITALIZED** THE **ORDER** OF KNIGHTHOOD.”

From *The Primitive Rule of the Knights Templar*

In **Jerusalem**, in 1119, a group of knights, led by the French Hugues de Payens (*c.*1070–1136), formed an order to **protect pilgrims** travelling along the dangerous road from Jaffa, on the coast, to the holy city. The new king of Jerusalem, **Baldwin II** (cousin of Baldwin I and his successor as count of Edessa), assigned them quarters in part of the **Temple Mount** compound, next to the site where the **Temple of Solomon** had once stood. Accordingly, they called themselves the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon – also known as the **Knights Templar**.

Bologna University was the first in the western world. It was founded in 1119 (or possibly earlier, depending on the source). Institutions such as Bologna University were the incubators for the philosophical school of thought known as **Scholasticism** (see panel, right).

IN 1121, MOHAMMAD IB-TUMART, A BERBER LEADER from the Atlas Mountains, was hailed as the **al-Mahdi** (the Muslim messiah – see 874) and led his forces, known as the **Almohads**, in a **campaign of conquest** against Almoravid territories in Africa.

A synod at the German town of **Worms**, in 1122, presided by a papal legate drew up a concordat (agreement) ending the **Investiture Controversy** – though not the imperial–papal rivalry. A compromise was agreed along the lines already adopted between **Henry I of England** and **Anselm** (see 1107), under which the emperor would be involved in investiture but not control it. Essentially it was a **victory for the papacy**.

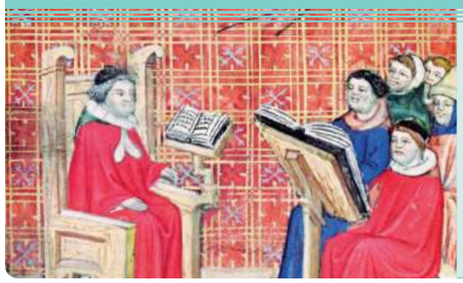
In 1123, **Frankish forces** from Jerusalem **defeated a Fatimid army** at Ibelin, while off the coast at Ascalon (Ashkelon), Venetian ships destroyed the Fatimid fleet. This marked the start of the dominance of **Italian maritime power** in the Mediterranean.

Emperor Henry V died in 1125, with no male heir, and an election was held to choose his successor. The closest heir was **Conrad of Swabia** (1122–90), of the house of **Hohenstaufen** (allied to the Salian dynasty and their anti-papal policies), but the powerful archbishops of Mainz and Cologne angled for the election of a candidate more friendly to the Church. **Lothair of Saxony** (1075–1137), of the house of Welf, was chosen and became **Emperor Lothair II** (III in some sources). Immediately he was plunged into a bitter **civil war** with the Hohenstaufens, and the two opposing sides became entrenched as pro-papal and pro-imperial factions known as the **Guelphs** and **Ghibellines** respectively. They would plague relations between and within the **city-states of northern Italy** into the 14th century – long after they had ceased to dominate German power politics – as they became associated with class struggles and **reactionary versus reforming parties**.

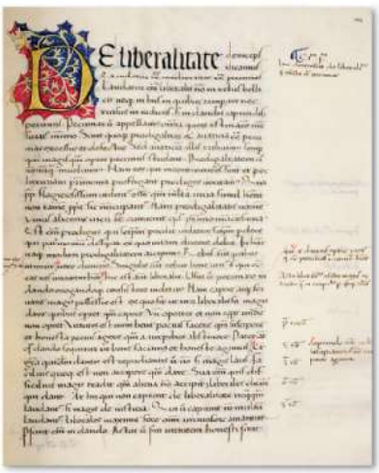
The work of **Aristotle** (384–322 BCE) had survived in Byzantium and among the Arabs, but Western Europeans only had access to a translation by the philosopher **Boethius** of one treatise on logic. This began to change in the early 12th century, as the conquest of Islamic areas such as **Toledo** and **Sicily** gave Christian scholars access to Arabic works. Increasing exposure to the works of Aristotle led medieval scholars to consider him the “**master of those who know**” and the chief authority on matters of reason.

In 1125, the French king **Louis VI** (1081–1137) successfully rallied French nobles to repel an **English–German invasion**. This proved to be a milestone in the French monarchy’s attempts to assert its authority, and thus in the emergence of **France as a nation-state**.

SCHOLASTICISM



The school of thought known as Scholasticism – because it was taught by the scholastics, or school masters – developed as the dominant philosophy of learning in medieval Europe, hand in hand with the emergence of the universities. Scholasticism was an approach to learning that used a method of formal discussion and debating. It became the intellectual basis for medieval religious and philosophical dogma.



Aristotle in translation *A page from a translation of Aristotle’s* Nicomachean Ethics, *written on vellum – a writing material made from calf skin, which is more durable than papyrus or paper.*

25 PER CENT THE APPROXIMATE **PROPORTION** OF **ARISTOTLE’S WORK SURVIVING** TODAY

1118 Baldwin of Bourcq becomes **Baldwin II**, king of Jerusalem

1118 **Alexius I Comnenus**, Byzantine emperor, institutes a form of feudalism in the empire

1119 **Knights Templar** founded in Jerusalem

1119 Foundation of **Bologna University**

1121 Almohads begin **conquest of Almoravid** territories

1122 Concordat of Worms ends **Investiture Controversy**

1123 **First Lateran Council**: pope outlaws simony (selling of

1123 **Baldwin II** captured by Danishmend Turks

1123 **Fatimids** defeated at Ibelin and Ascalon

1123 **Danishmend Turks** take Aleppo from Seljuks and found **independent emirate**

1123 Founding of **St Bartholomew’s Fair** in London

1124 **Louis IV** repels English–German invasion

1124 **Baldwin II** ransomed, then wins Tyre

1124 **Hasan i-Sabbah** dies (b. 1050s)

1125 Death of Henry V triggers start of what will become known as the **Guelph–Ghibelline conflict**

1125 **Lothair** elected king of the Romans; renews expansion into Slavic territory

1125 **Jin** occupy Beijing; Khitan Liao dynasty collapses

***c.*1125** Death of **David III** of Georgia (b. 1073), who established it as independent state

1126–30

A mosaic shows Roger II being symbolically crowned by Christ.

IN 1126, THE JIN – the Jurchen dynasty established by Aguda (see 1115) in Manchuria – turned on their erstwhile Chinese allies, **overrunning northern China** and seizing the Northern Song capital at **Kaifeng**. The Jin took control of northern China and moved the capital to Beijing. This marked the **end of the Northern Song**. However, a Song prince, **Gaozong**, escaped to the south and established the **Southern Song** dynasty in Hangzhou in 1127.

The death of **Pope Honorius**, in 1130, resulted in the election of two rival popes, **Innocent II** and **Anacletus II**. During this papal schism, **Roger II**, count of Sicily, recognized Anacletus as pope – his reward was the throne of Sicily.

Song dynasty porcelain ware
The Qingbai ("blue-white") glaze on this ewer is characteristic of Song dynasty porcelain from southeastern China, where the dynasty survived the Jin invasion.

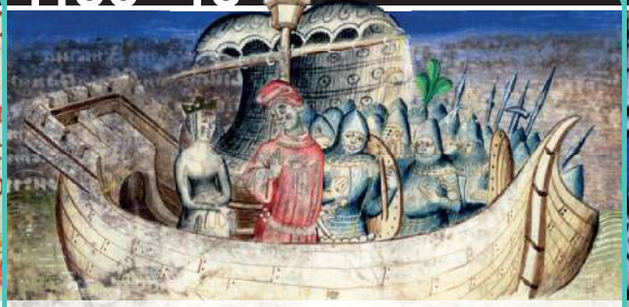
1131–35

St Alban's Chronicle, shows Matilda of England holding a charter.

THE DEATH OF HENRY I, IN 1135, PITCHED ENGLAND INTO DYNASTIC STRIFE. His only male heir died in 1120 while crossing the English Channel, and although Henry had made his nobles swear allegiance to his daughter, the **Empress Matilda** (1102–67), she had spent little time in England and her second husband, **Geoffrey of Anjou**, was unpopular with the English nobles. Among those who had sworn fealty to Matilda was Henry's nephew and ward **Stephen of Blois** (r.1135–54). On his uncle's death he immediately went to London, secured the support of most of the nobles and the Church, and **had himself proclaimed king**. However, Matilda refused to renounce her claim, and their contest would lead to a period of warfare and breakdown of central authority known as the **Anarchy** (see 1136–40).

In 1133, **Lothair II** (1070–1137) went to Italy to intervene in the **papal schism**, installing **Innocent II**. In return, the Pope confirmed the **Matildine inheritance** (the vast estates of Matilda of Tuscany, which she had willed first to the papacy and then to the emperor, sparking a dispute that would become tied up with the Guelph versus Ghibelline contest – (see 1121–25) and **crowned Lothair as emperor**. In 1135, Lothair pacified his rivals, **Conrad of Hohenstaufen** and his brother **Frederick of Swabia**, apparently securing the German crown for his son-in-law **Henry the Proud**, of the House of Welf.

1136–40



An illustration from a 15th-century copy of the *History of the Kings of Britain*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, shows Brutus the Trojan setting sail for Britain.

IN 1137, LOTHAIR DIED SUDDENLY while returning from a successful campaign in Italy against **Roger of Sicily**. Lothair's plans to concentrate German territories in the hands of the **Welf clan**, and create a stable inheritance for his son-in-law, evaporated when the election of 1138 chose the Waiblinger **Conrad of Hohenstaufen** (1135–95). The Waiblingers were descended from the dukes of Franconia; the name was later corrupted by the Italians into "Ghibelline". Conrad set about reversing the grants of Lothair, taking Saxony away from the Welfs, which promptly sparked renewed civil war.

In 1139, Matilda entered England to reclaim her crown from the usurper Stephen of Blois. Stephen had failed to strengthen his position since taking the crown, alienating many of his nobles, on one hand, and powerful clerics, on the other. He particularly blundered by arresting his chief minister Roger, Bishop of Salisbury. At a stroke, he lost many of his ablest administrators, and was henceforth unable to rein in the depredations of barons and other landowners, who became laws unto themselves. The country deteriorated into a state of anarchy famously lamented by the author of the Peterborough Chronicle, who wrote that under Stephen's reign the English "suffered nineteen long winters... when Christ and all his saints slept".

Sometime around 1140, the Welsh cleric **Geoffrey of Monmouth** (*c.*1100–55) wrote the *History of the Kings of Britain*, an important example of early Anglo-Norman literature that introduced the legend of **King Arthur** to a European audience.

Legendary castle
Tintagel, Cornwall, where the ruins of a 13th-century castle still stand, is featured in the Arthurian legends created by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

1141–45

A scene from the Siege of Damascus, a battle of the Second Crusade.

IN 1141, JOHN OF SEVILLE TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC the *Epitome of the Whole of Astrology*, while in 1142 **Adelard of Bath** translated an Arabic version of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, one of the founding texts of mathematics. This **transmission of learning**, ancient and contemporary, via Arabic into Latin, was a key contributor to the emergence of an **intellectual renaissance** in Europe, and beyond that to the scientific achievements of the **Early Modern period** (1500–1800).

In an attempt to end the **civil war** that was convulsing Germany, an 1142 meeting, or diet, at Frankfurt confirmed the Welf **Henry the Lion** (1129–95) as **Duke of Saxony** (which he had already taken by force). Henry engaged in a vigorous renewal of **German expansion** to the east, where his

Pot helm helmet
This type of helmet was typical of those worn by Crusader knights. Made of steel, the pot helm helmet completely covered the head save for two small eyeslits.

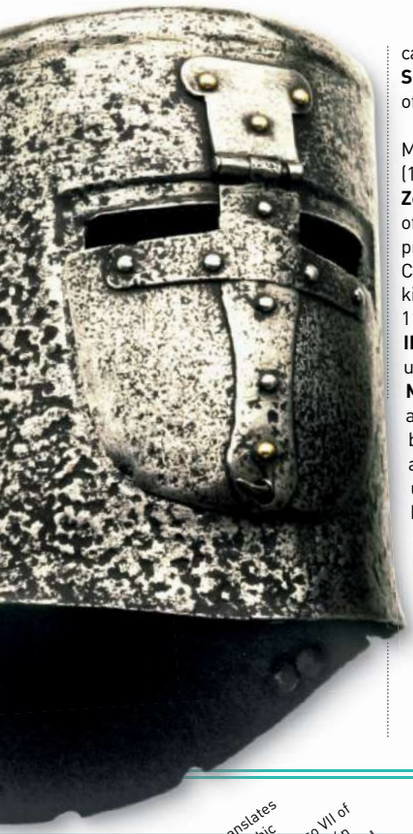
1126 Jurchen Jin defeat Northern Song, and overrun northern China
1127 Conrad elected **king of the Romans** as rival to Lothair
1127 Imad el-Din Zengi founds **Zengid dynasty** in Mosul
1127 Southern Song dynasty established
1127 Stephen II of Hungary takes Belgrade and Sofia from the Byzantines
1130 Roger II becomes **king of Sicily**
1131 Fulk of Anjou becomes King of Jerusalem
1133 Lothair II expels Anacletus, installs **Innocent II** as pope, and is crowned emperor
1134 Gothic tower built at Chartres
1135 Lothair's **year of pacification** – he asserts dominance in Germany
1135 Henry I of England dies (b.1068); **Stephen** usurps Matilda
1137 Accession of **Owain the Great** in Wales
1137 Central Asian Khanate of **Kara-Khitai** founded by Khitan general Yehlü
1137 Death of **Lothair II** (b.1070)
1138 Conrad III elected king of the Romans in Germany, leading to renewed **Welf–Waiblinger war**
1139 Matilda enters England to reclaim crown; start of period called the **Anarchy**
c.1139 Igbo of Niger develop sophisticated bronze-working skills
1140 Completion of the west front of **St Denis Basilica** in Paris – a landmark of **Gothic architecture**
c.1140 **Geoffrey of Monmouth** writes *History of the Kings of Britain*
1141 **Battle of Lincoln**: Stephen captured, Matilda becomes queen of England
1141 **Peace party** gains upper hand in **Southern Song** Empire
1141 **Kara-Khitai** defeat Seljuks at Samarkand
1142 **Diet of Frankfurt**: an attempt to end Welf–Waiblinger conflict in Germany

1146–50

Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, was built during the reign of Suryavarman II. It covers nearly 200 hectares (500 acres) and the central tower is 42m (138ft) high.

> “THOSE WHO ARE OF GOD... **STRIVE** TO **OPPOSE** THE MULTITUDE OF THE **INFIDELS,** WHO **REJOICE** IN A VICTORY GAINED OVER US, AND **DEFEND THE ORIENTAL CHURCH** FREED FROM THEIR **TYRANNY** BY SO GREAT AN OUTPOURING OF THE **BLOOD OF YOUR FATHERS...**”

Pope Eugenius III, from Papal bull calling for the Second Crusade, 1145



IN 1146, THE INFLUENTIAL CISTERCIAN MONK, BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX (1090–1153), egged on by Pope Eugenius III, preached a new Crusade to liberate Edessa from the clutches of the Zengids; **Conrad III of Germany** (1093–1152) and **Louis VII of France** (1120–80) “took the cross”. But the expedition was a **disastrous** affair, except for incidental success in Portugal achieved by a contingent of English and Flemish Crusaders who helped Afonso-Henriques, Count of Portugal, take Lisbon from the **Moors** in 1147. Conrad and Louis took different routes to the Holy Land, their armies meeting equally disastrous fates as they struggled through Anatolia. In 1148, forced to hitch a lift on a Byzantine ship, having lost his army at the **Battle of Dorylaeum**, Conrad met up with Louis. Rather than pitch their depleted forces against the powerful Zengids, they decided instead to launch an attack on Damascus, the only Muslim state that was friendly to the Crusader kingdoms. Hampered by **lack of supplies** and threatened by the Zengid leader Nur al-Din, successor to Imad el-Din, the **Siege of Damascus** also **failed**. The Second Crusade broke up having failed to achieve anything beyond a damaging fallout. Louis was cuckolded by one of his generals, eventually leading to a divorce from his wife, **Eleanor of Aquitaine** (c.1122–04), and the loss of her territories (see 1151–55). The **Byzantines** were forced to step in where the Crusade had failed, occupying western Edessa, but **Roger of Sicily** took advantage of Byzantine distraction to invade and plunder Greece in 1147. The disasters of the Second Crusade marked the beginning of the **decline** of the **Frankish Crusader kingdoms**.

In 1147, the **Almohads** under **Abd al-Mu’min** (1094–1163) completed the conquest of Almoravid Morocco, taking **Marrakech**, before invading **Moorish Spain** (although it took them until 1172 to subjugate all the Islamic kingdoms).

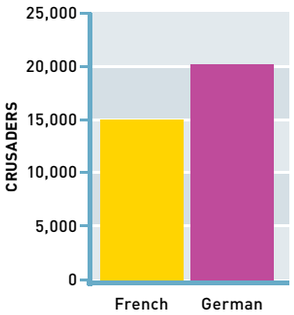
Suryavarman II (c.1113–50) was the most warlike **Khmer king**, although most of his foreign adventures were unsuccessful. He launched attacks against the **Dai Vet** of northern Vietnam and made repeated attempts to subjugate the **Champa**. More significant was his building programme, the zenith of which was the **temple of Angkor Wat**. This vast complex includes five towers symbolizing holy mountains, and masses of elaborate carvings.

Koutoubia Mosque in Morocco
The Koutoubia (“booksellers”) Mosque, built by the Almohads, reflects the mercantile success of Almohad Marrakech, where book, cloth, and other souqs flourished.

campaigns against the heathen **Slavs** were given the status of Crusades.

In 1144, the atabeg (governor) of Mosul, **Imad el-Din Zengi** (1085–1146), founder of the **Zengid dynasty**, took advantage of feuding between the Crusader principalities to seize the Crusader county of Edessa. Fulk, king of Jerusalem, had died in 1143 and his successor **Baldwin III** (1130–63) was only a child, under the regency of his mother **Melisende**. She did not have the authority to settle a dispute between Antioch and Edessa, and Imad el-Din besieged Edessa until it fell to him. **The loss of Edessa** caused alarm and outrage in Europe, and provided the trigger for the **Second Crusade** (see 1146–50).

In 1145, Eugenius III issued a call-to-arms in the form of a Papal bull.



French and German Crusaders
The German force outnumbered the French contingent during the Second Crusade. Neither army achieved any success: defeat in Anatolia preceded failure at Damascus.

200 HECTARES
THE **AREA** OF **ANGKOR WAT**

1142 **Adelard of Bath** translates Euclid’s *Elements* from Arabic

1143 Alfonso VII of Castile and León recognizes **Afonso I** as king of Portugal

1144 Death of **William of Norwich** leads to anti-Semitic **pogroms** in England

1145 Khmer emperor **Suryavarman II** invades the kingdom of Champa

1146 **Bernard of Clairvaux** preaches the Crusade

1146 Normans of Sicily take **Tripolitana** as Roger seeks to create a Mediterranean empire

1147 **Wend** uprising versus the **Saxons**

1147 The **Moors** are expelled from Lisbon

1148 Second Crusade climaxes with failed **Siege of Damascus**

1149 **Champa** recapture capital from the **Khmer**

1143 Manuel I Comnenus forced to deal with **Armenian rebellion**

1144 Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, completes **conquest of Normandy**

1144 Zengid atabeg of Mosul seizes **Edessa**, triggering Second Crusade

1145 Construction begins on the west portal of **Chartres Cathedral**

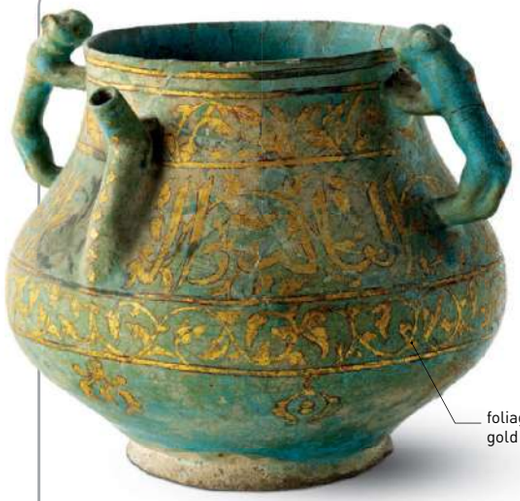
1147 Conrad of Germany and Louis of France depart on **Crusade**

1147 **Almohads** complete conquest of Almoravid Morocco, then invade Spain

1147 Roger of Sicily establishes the **silk industry** in Sicily, having raided Byzantine Greece

1149 **Raymond of Antioch** defeated by forces of Nuradin

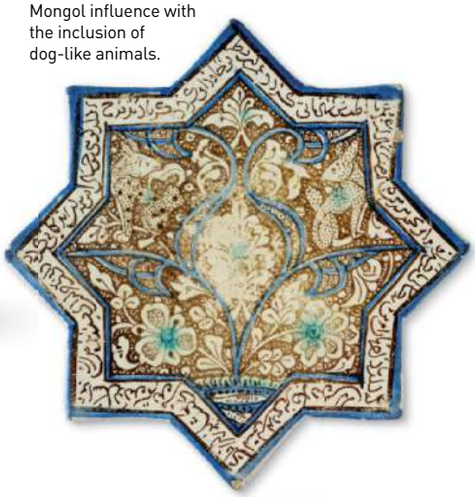
c.1150 Construction of the temple of **Angkor Wat**



Persian ceramic and gold leaf ewer
1200–1399 • IRAN
It was prohibited to make drinking vessels from gold and silver, as these were considered indulgent, so Islamic craftsmen became expert in alternatives such as ceramic, which was then richly decorated.

Bronze vase
18TH CENTURY • CHINA
Although this bronze vase from China displays a text from the Qu'ran in Arabic, it nonetheless shows clear Chinese influence.

Though distinctively Islamic in its use of lustre (a ceramic technology mimicking gilding) and arabesques (stylized foliage), this tile shows Mongol influence with the inclusion of dog-like animals.



THE ISLAMIC WORLD

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND RELIGIOUS INSPIRATION COMBINE TO CREATE A UNIQUE HERITAGE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

Islamic arts and crafts were shaped by religious restrictions, cultural heritage acquired through conquest, and the elaboration of unique features, notably the use of ornamentation and colour, and inclusion of Arabic script.

Through its rapid conquest of a huge empire, the Islamic caliphate was exposed to a diverse mix of cultural styles and heritages; Islamic art reflects these while maintaining a high degree of homogeneity due to religious uniformity. Restrictions imposed by Islam, such as prohibitions on representative art and on the use of gold and silver, generated creative responses, especially stylized abstract designs, elaborate ornamentation, strong use of colour, and the use of Arabic script and Qu'ranic quotations.

Surgical scissors and scalpel
10TH CENTURY • ORIGIN UNKNOWN
Islamic physicians made huge advances in medicine and surgery, including devising a range of surgical instruments such as the *mibda* (scalpel) and *miqass* (scissors).

Jade necklace
1875–1925 • ORIGIN UNKNOWN
This jade necklace is made from five pieces, all different in shape and engraved with verses from the Qu'ran. Such artefacts could serve as amulets with quasi-magical powers.

Pendant
18TH CENTURY • INDIA
From the Indian Mughal Empire, this gold pendant shows how Muslim rulers sometimes disregarded prohibitions on representative art and the use of precious metals.

Coins
720–910 • SYRIA/EGYPT
Coins from the Ummayad and Abbadis caliphates, minted in Damascus and Cairo, bear Arabic text in place of pictures of heads of state.

Khanjar
19TH CENTURY • INDIA
Although from India, this curved, double-edged dagger is actually a traditional Omani blade. It is decorated with ornate foliage, a typical Islamic motif.

Ornate gilded Shi'ite alam
17TH CENTURY • IRAN
This alam, or standard, made of brass and gold, symbolically recalls the Shi'ite standard planted at the Battle of Kerbala in 680.

Bowl
1000–1199 • IRAN/IRAQ
The bold colours of this simple bowl are typically Islamic, as is the interlacing cord design. The lace of highlighted detail lends a meditative quality to the design.

Feline incense burner
11–12TH CENTURIES • IRAN/AFGHANISTAN
Burners like this, in the shape of a big cat, were used in the courts of Medieval Islamic kings – lions and cheetahs symbolized power. The head tilts to allow insertion of charcoal.

Candlestick
15TH CENTURY • MAMLUK EGYPT
To circumvent the prohibition on precious metals, Islamic metalworkers became adept at combining baser metals like brass with silver and gold inlay.

Qibla compass
DATE AND ORIGIN UNKNOWN
This ornamental compass was used to indicate the direction, *qibla*, of Mecca, so that worshippers could orient themselves properly for prayer.

Calligraphy scissors
1700–99 • IRAN
These scissors were used for shaping pens and brushes. The blades are inlaid with gold, a variety of damascening known as *koftgari*.

Pen case
1700–1899 • ORIGIN UNKNOWN
This hexagonal case for carrying pens bares geometric shapes, a typical feature of Islamic design.

Islamic lamp
DATE AND ORIGIN UNKNOWN
This hourglass-shaped lamp bares a design of Arabic script on the side, which is picked out in vibrant blue, a ceramic dye perfected by Islamic craftsmen.

Illuminated Divan
1800–99 • INDIA
A Divan, or Diwan, is a collection or anthology of poems, inspired by ancient Persian poetry models. This illuminated Divan of the Persian poet Hafez from 19th-century India has typical Kashmiri painted lacquer covers.

1151–55

Monks Mound, the largest mound at Cahokia, is over 30m (100ft) high. It has been estimated that it took 15 million baskets of earth to make it.

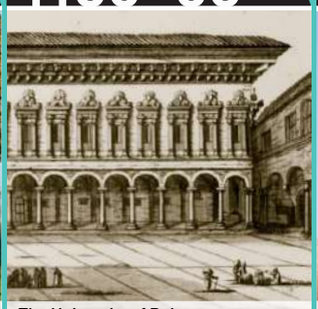
THE CITY OF CAHOKIA SPRANG UP AT THE CLIMAX of the Mississippian (or Cahokian) culture of the American Bottom (an area of the Mississippi River Valley). Around the mid-12th century they constructed more than **100 mounds**, including one with a base that is larger than that of the Great Pyramid at Giza, along with a huge landscaped plaza that may be the **biggest earthen city square in the world**. The most remarkable feature of Cahokia is the speed with which it came into existence. Until around 1050, **Mississippians** lived in small villages and had never built on anything approaching this scale. By the 1150s the city may have covered **493 hectares (4,000 acres)** and been home to **30,000 people**. Its cultural and economic influence spread across the **Midwest**, from the present Canadian border to the Gulf Coast. Perhaps because urban living was so exceptional for the Mississippians, Cahokia would **decline rapidly**, within around a century, with a return to low-density farming communities.

In 1152, **Conrad III** (b.1093), king of the Romans, died and his nephew **Frederick of Swabia**, known as **Barbarossa** (see panel, below) was elected as successor. Of combined Welf and Waiblinger parentage (see 1131–35), he brought relative peace to Germany. His coronation as **emperor** in Rome was delayed because the city was in the grip of a **revolutionary commune** led by radical reformer **Arnold of Brescia** (1090–1155). Frederick allied with the papacy against Arnold and Norman Sicily, making his first expedition to Italy in 1154. The following year, in the face of Roman hostility, he was crowned by the new pope, **Adrian IV** (1100–59), but had to retreat to Germany, abandoning Adrian, who was forced to ally himself with **the Normans**.

FREDERICK BARBAROSSA (1122–90)

Energetic and ambitious, Frederick I was determined to make Germany the dominant state in Europe, and to reassert authority over all the imperial lands in Italy. Aware of the historic context of his office, he desired to restore the imperial crown to Roman-era glory, and began to style his realm the Holy Roman Empire. In Germany, he pacified rebels and expanded royal lands.

1156–60

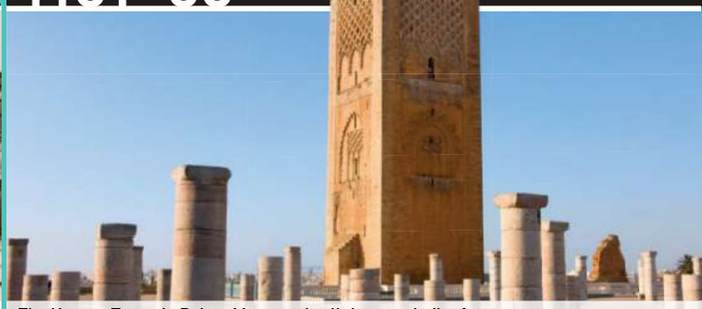


The University of Bologna was originally a school for jurists.

WITH ORIGINS DATING BACK TO PERHAPS 1088, BOLOGNA CLAIMS to be the **oldest university** in the Western world (see 1116–20) – in the sense of an institution specifically designated as a ***universitas***, as opposed to a *studium generale*, as centres for teaching had previously been known. In 1158, the emperor **Frederick I** (1122–90), on the advice of scholars who may have been **Bologna alumni**, granted the university a charter, firmly establishing the institution as an **independent centre of scholarship**. Early universities tended to specialize in one field of study, and Bologna was **dedicated to law**.

In 1159, **Alexander III** (*c.*1100–81) was chosen as pope, although his election was opposed by the emperor, **Frederick I**. Frederick had once again invaded Italy, this time intent on assuming his full imperial inheritance. With the aid of the **League of Pavia** (Bresci, Parma, and others), he had subdued Milan and its associated cities, but at the **Diet of Roncaglia**, in 1158, he had gone too far. Harking back to the Roman era, Frederick insisted that ancient law gave him the right to appoint an **imperial podestà** (local governor) to rule each city. Milan was pushed into revolt, and other cities joined them in forming a **Lombard League** under the auspices of the papacy. Alexander III would earn the title "**the Great**" for leading this anti-imperial rebellion.

1161–65



The Hassan Tower in Rabat, Morocco, is all that was built of what was intended to be an Almohad super-mosque.

The Bodhisattva Guanyin
This 12th-century Chinese statue depicts the Buddhist deity Guanyin, who protects those in danger – perhaps accounting for his popularity.

IN 1161, THE SOUTHERN SONG REPULSED AN INCURSION by the northern Jin (see 1126–30), securing their kingdom from invasion. A peace treaty of 1165 recognized an uneasy truce between the two powers.

The **Almohad** caliph **Abd al-Mu'min** died in 1163, having destroyed the **Almoravids** and extended Almohad rule from Morocco to Tunisia (the province of Ifriqiya). He made his office **hereditary**, and his son **Yusuf abn Ya'qub** (1135–84) succeeded him. He would spend most of his reign battling **internal opposition**, although he was also noted for military success in **Muslim Spain** and for his patronage of the arts.

In 1164, the Zengid emir **Nur al-Din** (1118–74) defeated the Crusader princes at **Artah**. Throughout the 1160s, Nur al-Din contested with the Crusader kingdoms, particularly as they vied for control of the **ailing Fatimid** kingdom in **Egypt**, led by the vizier **Shawar**. **Amalric**, who had become king of Jerusalem in 1162, was the first to occupy Egypt, but **Zengid success** at Artah forced him to march north, leaving the way clear for Nur al-Din's general Shirkuh and his nephew **Saladin** to invade Egypt (see 1167).

Around the mid-12th century, the dense urban culture of the ancient **Pueblo peoples** at **Chaco Canyon** in North America collapsed, probably because their marginal system of agriculture had overtaxed the **fragile dryland ecology**, leaving them vulnerable to drought. Dating of timbers from the Chaco Canyon pueblos show that the youngest timbers date from around the 1160s – in other words, there was no construction after this. Other Pueblo, or **Anasazi**, sites show evidence from this period of fortification, destruction, and even cannibalism, but there is also evidence of orderly abandonment, presumably by people moving to new sites.

c.1150s Climax of the **Cahokia** mound settlement, North America

1151 First use of gunpowder **explosives** in warfare in China

1152 Frederick I (Barbarossa) succeeds Conrad as king of the Romans

1152 Eleanor of Aquitaine marries Henry of Anjou – their combined lands create the **Angevin Empire**

1153 Jin move their capital from Manchuria to **Beijing**

1154 Henry II becomes king of England

1155 Frederick I crowned emperor

c.1156 Yoruba city states are flourishing, West Africa

1158 Frederick I grants charter to **Bologna University**, Italy

1159 Election of **Pope Alexander III**, the Great; formation of **Lombard League** to oppose Frederick in Italy

1161 Battle of Zaishi: Southern Song repulse Jin invasion, China

1162 Thomas Becket becomes Archbishop of Canterbury

1163 Yusuf abn Ya'qub becomes **Almohad** caliph

1164 Battle of Artah: Nur al-Din captures Prince Bohemond III of Antioch

1164 Constitutions of Clarendon issued by Henry II of England to curb the power of papal authority

c.1165 Collapse of **Chaco Canyon** Pueblo culture

1166–70

The murder of Thomas Becket is depicted in stained glass at Canterbury Cathedral. Canonized in 1173 , Becket became one of the most popular English saints.

> “WILL NO ONE **RID ME OF THIS TURBULENT PRIEST?**”
>
> Attributed to **Henry II**, 1170

IN 1170, THOMAS BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, England, by four knights of the court of **Henry II** (r.1154–89). Although he swore that he had not ordered the crime, and was absolved of responsibility by **Pope Alexander** in 1172, Henry's famous outburst (see above) had prompted the action of the knights. The context for this outrage was an ongoing dispute over the extent of ecclesiastical versus royal jurisdiction. During the anarchy of **Stephen's reign** (see 1136–40), clerical courts had encroached on areas previously under royal jurisdiction. Following Stephen's death, **Henry Plantagenet** came to the throne. He controlled England alongside the territories of Anjou, Normandy, and Aquitaine – known as the **Angevin Empire** – and set about instituting a badly needed reorganization of his new kingdom. **Taxation reforms**, for instance, replaced the Danegeld with new levies, but it was the **judicial reform** that brought him into conflict with his friend and chancellor **Thomas Becket**. Becket had already been forced into exile after being found guilty of violating the **Constitutions of Clarendon** (see 1164). On his return he vexed Henry by **excommunicating** royally favoured bishops.

At its height, in the late 12th century, the commercial **empire of Srivijaya**, based in Sumatra, controlled much of the **Malay Archipelago**. Its authority extended to colonies around the East Indies and as far as **Sri Lanka** and **Taiwan**. Srivijayan power was based almost exclusively on its **maritime prowess**. By securing the seas in the region against piracy they enabled and directed **trade** between China, India, and the Islamic world, but imposition of heavy duties and taxes stoked resentment and, eventually, revolt.

Frederick I's fourth expedition to Italy, beginning in 1166, prompted the renewal of the **Lombard League** (see 1156–60) and the construction of the mighty fortress town **Alessandria**, named for the pope. With this citadel guarding the mountain passes, **Italy became virtually independent** of imperial authority.

Votive tablet
This votive tablet from the trading empire of Srivijaya is engraved with Buddhist figures. The ruling Sailendras were ardent Buddhists.

1171–75

Muhammad of Ghur, travelling by elephant, leads his army in the Islamic conquest of India.

THE GHURIDS WERE A DYNASTY FOUNDED IN 1151 by Ala-ud-Din Husayn, who conquered much of **Ghaznavid Afghanistan** and founded a new state based at **Ghur** in western Afghanistan. In 1173, **Ghiyas-ud-Din** became emir, making his brother Mu'izz-du-Din, better known as **Muhammad of Ghur**, co-emir. Together the brothers brought most of Afghanistan under their control, and in 1175 Muhammad launched the **Islamic invasion** of northern India.

The Spanish rabbi **Benjamin of Tudela** (1130–73) was the **first recorded European** to have approached the borders of **China**, in an epic journey he made from 1159 to 1173. His account, *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela*, recounts many exotic legends, including **Noah's Ark** resting on Mount Ararat.

In the medieval period, the city of **Pisa**, in Tuscany, became the centre of a thriving **city-state**. Its cathedral was constructed in the 11th century, but in 1173 work began on a separate **bell tower**. Even during construction the foundations sank and the tower **began to slant**. Eventually it came to lean 4.5m (15ft) from the perpendicular.

During the 1170s, a new **religious movement** emerged in Lyons. Also known as the Poor Men of Lyons and the Vaudois, the **Waldenses** were led by Peter Waldes (*c.*1140–1218), a rich merchant who gave away his property and began to preach a radical creed of **gospel simplicity** that rejected many of the teachings of Catholicism. Despite initial blessing by **Pope Alexander III**, the Waldensians' refusal to abide by his injunction against preaching led to their **denunciation as heretics** in 1179 and a long history of persecution (see 1206–10).

In 1174, the Zengid emir **Nur al-Din** died. His nephew **Saladin**, who had already assumed control of **Egypt**, quickly marched north to secure **Syria**, and was duly recognized as **sultan** of Egypt and Syria by the caliph in Baghdad, founding the **Ayyubid dynasty**.

Leaning Tower of Pisa
Pisa's famous leaning tower is 54.5m (179ft) tall and 17.5m (57ft) in diameter at the base.

1166 Grand Prince **Boleslaw IV** of Poland defeated by the pagan Prussians

1166 Frederick's fourth expedition to Italy prompts renewal of **Lombard League**

1167 Amalric of Jerusalem allies with **Fatimids** against the **Zengids**

1168 Amalric invades Egypt but is forced to withdraw by **Nur al-Din**

1169 **Casimir of Poland** invades Russia

1169 **Saladin (Salah al-Din)** becomes Zengid vizier in Egypt

1169 Sultan **Kilij Arslan II** of Rum takes city of Ankara in his conquest of the **Danishmend Turks**

c.1170s **Sack of Tula** as **Toltecs** are destroyed by northern Mexican tribes including **Aztecs**

c.1170 Climax of **Srivijaya** kingdom in Java

1170 Murder of **Thomas Becket** (b.1118)

1170 **Anglo-Normans** under Robert "Strongbow" FitzStephen active in Ireland

1171 Conflict between **Byzantines** and **Venice** over dominance of trade

1171 **Henry II** of England lands in Ireland

1171 Death of last **Fatimid** caliph; Egypt completely under control of **Zengids**

1172 Byzantine emperor **Manuel I Comnenus** captures Stephen Nemanja, leader of the Serbs

1173 **Benjamin of Tudela** returns from Asia, and writes his *Travels*

1173 Construction begins on the **Leaning Tower of Pisa**

c.1173 Peter Waldes forms **Waldensian** Christian movement

1174 Death of Nur al-Din and Amalric: **Saladin** seizes Damascus, Syria

1175 **Muhammad of Ghur** invades India

1176–80

This depiction of the Battle of Yashima during the Gempei wars illustrates a heavily armed Minamoto discovering the terrified mother of Emperor Taira.

EMPEROR FREDERICK BARBARROSA'S FIFTH EXPEDITION TO ITALY in 1176 (see also 1151–55) ended in disaster for the imperial forces when his army was crushed at the **Battle of Legnano**. The battle marked one of the earliest occasions in the medieval era when cavalry were defeated by infantry. This had class implications as knights on horses generally belonged to the feudal aristocracy, while footmen with pikes represented freemen of the rising bourgeoisie. In 1177, Frederick was forced to concede the **Peace of Venice** with the pope; a prelude to the more comprehensive Peace of Constance in 1183 (see 1181–85).

Now reconciled with the emperor, **Pope Alexander III** was able to call an ecumenical council at the Lateran Palace in Rome, in 1179. The council decreed that **papal elections** would be solely in the hands of the cardinals, and that a two-thirds majority was needed to elect a pope. It was hoped that this would draw a line under years of contention between papal candidates elected by the anti-imperial party and **"anti-popes"** – persons selected by the emperor to oppose the legitimately elected or sitting pope.

In 1176, the army of **Byzantine emperor** Manuel Commenus was destroyed by the Turks of the **Sultanate of Rum** (see 1100–05) at the **Battle of Myriocephalum**. The Byzantines were never again able to send land forces to help the Crusaders.

The **Gempei Wars** (1180–85) in Japan marked the **end of Taira domination** of Japan (see 641–650), and the start of the **Minamoto shogunate**. Civil wars in 1156 and 1159 had left control of Japan in the hands of Taira no Kiyomori (*c.*1118–81), who quickly assumed a similar level of power to the **Fujiwara clan** (see 851–860). Not only did he act as prime minister, but he also married his daughters to the imperial family, enabling him to place his infant grandson on the throne as emperor in 1180. But his excessive lust for power and perceived corruption alienated his provincial supporters, and in the same year there was an uprising by the **Minamoto clan** against Taira rule, which grew into the five-year-long Gempei Wars.

Pope Alexander III
This 14th-century fresco shows Pope Alexander III presenting a sword to the Venetian Doge for use against the emperor, Frederick Barbarossa.

COAL AND IRON IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Growing populations, new agricultural implements, and constant military activity increased the demand for iron in the Middle Ages. Charcoal was still the main source of power for iron forges, but deforestation caused wood shortages. As a consequence, demand for coal increased in and scavenging for sea coal was increasingly supplemented by mining. The first record of a coal mine comes from Escomb near Durham, in northern England in 1183.

1181–85

> **"SALADIN'S** HOPE HAD AN EASY PASSAGE, HIS **PATHS** WERE **FRAGRANT,** HIS **GIFTS POURED OUT, ...** HIS **POWER** WAS **MANIFEST,** HIS **AUTHORITY SUPREME."**
>
> **Imad al Din, Secretary to Saladin,** from *Lightning of Syria, c.*1200

BY THE 1180S, THE CRUSADER KINGDOMS OF OUTREMER ("beyond the sea", as they were known in Europe) were in an increasingly precarious position. Europe was deaf to entreaties for **Crusader reinforcements**, and the Christian Byzantines were preoccupied with other matters, such as war with Norman Sicily. Meanwhile, their Muslim opponents were gathering under the leadership of **Saladin**, or Salah al-Din, (*c.*1137–93) the sultan of Egypt and Syria. By 1183, he had suppressed Christian rebels at Edessa and Aleppo, and with both sides reeling from the effects of a drought, had brokered a peace treaty with the leper **king of Jerusalem, Baldwin IV** (*c.*1161–85). The uneasy peace was shattered, however, by the actions of Reynald of Châtillon, an adventurer from the Second Crusade, who persistently raided unarmed caravans of Islamic pilgrims, and sponsored a pirate fleet that pillaged the Red Sea. Saladin mobilized his army, intent on punishing Reynald, but his progress was checked by **Frankish fortresses** and another prolonged **famine**. In 1185, Baldwin died and his sickly infant nephew inherited the crown as **Baldwin V** (1177–86).

In 1183, the peace between Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and his Italian foes was ratified as the Peace of Constance, but although imperial authority over Italy was recognized, the **Lombard** cities were granted effective autonomy.

The **Battle of Dannoura** of 1185 marked the climax of the **Gempei Wars**. Warrior Minamoto Yoshitsune, younger brother of Yoritomo, the founder of the shogunate, destroyed the Taira in the naval battle.

Saladin, sultan of Egypt and Syria
Saladin escapes from battle on a camel in this 18th-century engraving. He was renowned as a generous and principled leader.

1176 Byzantine army defeated by Turks at **Battle of Myriocephalum**

1177 **Kingdom of Champa** sacks Khmer city of Angkor

1176 **Battle of Legnano** between Frederick Barbarossa and the Lombard League

1177 **Peace of Venice** between Frederick Barbarossa and the pope

1179 **Third Lateran Council** held in Rome

1180 **Philip II** Augustus (r.1180–1223) becomes **King of France**

1180 **Gempei Wars** in Japan (to 1185)

1181 Accession of **Jayavarman VII** of Khmer (reigned until 1215)

1183 **Saladin** mobilizes his army against Reynald of Châtillon

1183 **Peace of Constance** between Frederick Barbarossa and Lombard League

1184 **Diet of Mainz**, leads to Third Crusade

1185 The Taira defeated at **Battle of Dannoura** in Japan

1185 **Second Bulgarian Empire** is founded (to 1396)

1186–90

The Horns of Hattin, an extinct volcano crowned with two rocky outcrops, was the site of the Battle of Hattin in 1187.

ON 4TH JULY 1187, THE CRUSADER ARMY WAS DEFEATED by the forces of Saladin. The Crusader forces were led by the new king of Jerusalem, **Guy of Lusignan**, who had seized power on the death of the infant Baldwin V in 1186. Baldwin's regents had negotiated another truce with Saladin, but once again, Reynald of Châtillon had broken it, raiding a caravan of pilgrims and provoking **Saladin** into a final campaign to sweep the Holy Land clear of the Christian principalities. Goaded by Reynald, King Guy led a combined force of Crusader knights, **Templars**, Hospitallers, and English mercenaries (see 1116–20) across a waterless plateau in the blazing heat to take up a position on the **Horns of Hattin**, an extinct volcano. Between them and Lake Tiberias – the main source of fresh water for the thirst-crazed knights – lay the well-rested and provisioned army of Saladin. Using raiding tactics, Saladin drove the Crusaders into desperate confusion, surrounding and capturing them all. More than 200 Templars and Hospitallers were executed, while Saladin personally beheaded Reynald. King Guy was later released, but, with his army annihilated, it was easy for Saladin to cow many of the remaining Crusader strongholds into surrender. He took **Acre** in July and **Jerusalem** in October. Tyre, Antioch, Tripoli, and a few castles were all that remained of the Crusader kingdoms.

3:2 **Battle of Hattin**
Saladin's troops outnumbered the Crusaders by 30,000 to 20,000, yet his success was owed to his tactics and the Christians' desperate thirst.

The Crusader kingdom of Outremer had been pleading for European assistance for years and the **fall of Jerusalem** in 1187 finally prompted Pope Gregory VIII to preach a **new Crusade**. The dispatch of Anglo-French forces was delayed by disputes between Henry II of England and Philip II of France, and then by the death of Henry and the accession of Richard I in 1189. Richard I and Philip II finally set out in late 1190. Frederick Barbarossa had already set out overland in 1189, but was drowned en route the following year.

Samurai armour
This beautifully presented Japanese armour dates from the 19th century, though the first samurai warriors fought with similar armour in the 12th century.

1191–1200

King Richard I of England, also known as Richard the Lionheart, is shown leading Crusaders into battle.

THE THIRD CRUSADE was hampered by infighting among the European factions of the Crusaders of Outremer, and although **Richard the Lionheart** won most of his battles, he was unable to achieve his sworn aim of "liberating" Jerusalem. The Crusade had already got off to a bad start (see 1186–90), and there were further delays en route when, in 1191, Richard stopped to conquer Byzantine **Cyprus**. He sold the island to the Templars, who would later pass it on to the diminished Crusader kingdoms, where it became one of the main supports for continuing Christian presence in the **Holy Land**.

On finally arriving in Palestine, Richard joined Philip II of France in the **siege of Acre**, which was actually a double siege – King Guy had laid siege to the city on his release from captivity (see 1186–90), but Saladin had then encircled his forces. Acre was taken by the Crusaders in July and much of the population was massacred. Philip II returned to France, but Richard I had sworn to liberate Jerusalem, and marched along the coast, retaking towns and defeating Saladin at Arsuf in September. Although he would go on to clear Muslim forces from the rest of the coastal strip, and camp within sight of Jerusalem, Richard realized he did not have the forces needed to take and hold the holy city. With continued infighting among the Crusader barons, the murder of Conrad of Montferrat by **Assassins** (see 1081–90) soon after being made king, reinforcements arriving for Saladin, and bad news from England – where his brother John was scheming to seize the crown – Richard was forced to conclude a peace treaty with Saladin in 1192. **Outremer** would henceforth be confined to a 145km (90 mile) coastal strip, from Tyre to Jaffa, along with Antioch and Tripoli.

In 1192, **Minamoto Yoritomo** (see 1181–85) awarded himself the title Seii tai-shogun ("barbarian-subduing great general"). Since the end of the Gempei Wars, Yoritomo had dispatched all challengers, including his brother Yoshitsune. As undisputed military dictator, his *bakufu*, or administration, at Kamakura now supplanted the imperial court. Japan would be ruled by **shoguns** – military dictators - for centuries to come.

In 1192, the **Ghurids of Persia** defeated a Hindu rebellion at the Battle of Taraori near Thanesar in India. The following year, Delhi was taken and Muhammad of Ghur founded the **Sultanate of Delhi**.

CRUSADER ARMOUR

27kg THE WEIGHT OF **ARMOUR**
1.5kg THE WEIGHT OF A **SWORD**
0.4kg THE WEIGHT OF A **MACE**

1187 Byzantines recognize **Bulgarian independence**
1187 Pope Gregory VIII preaches the **Third Crusade**
1187 Battle of Hattin fought at Horns of Hattin, Israel
1189 Third Crusade launched, although conflict does not begin until 1190
1189 Accession of Richard I, "**the Lionheart**", to English throne
1189 Minamoto destroys Fujiwara clan; controls Japan as shogun
1189 Beginning of siege of Acre (to 1191)
1190 Frederick Barbarossa dies (b. 1122)
1190 Hoysala Empire of southern India destroy Chalukya empire
1192 Battle of Tararori; Ghurids crush Hindu confederacy
June 1192 Treaty of Ramla signed between Richard I and Saladin
1198 Innocent III elected pope

1201–05

A Persian painting shows Temujin, later known as Genghis Khan, battling the Tartars. The Tartar tribes fought constantly with the Mongols.

POPE INNOCENT III HAD PROCLAIMED A NEW CRUSADE in 1199, intent on restoring papal supervision to the crusading movement, and hoping to reunite the Greek and Latin churches to fulfil his vision of a **single Christian dominion** under the papacy. In 1201, envoys met Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice, to arrange passage to Egypt for the **Fourth Crusade**. Under the **Peace of Venice** (see 1176–80), the Venetians agreed to transport 33,500 men and 4,500 horses for a payment of 85,000 marks. In addition, they would supply 50 war galleys in return for half of the Crusaders' conquests.

When the Crusaders gathered in Venice in 1202, it transpired there were too few of them, and they could not pay the agreed bill. Instead, they agreed to help Venice by taking Zara in Dalmatia – a rich source of wood for Venetian galleys. Pope Innocent protested, but worse was to come. In 1204, the Crusaders arrived in **Constantinople**, where relations with the Byzantines quickly soured; the city was taken for the first time in its history, and was brutally sacked. A new **Latin Empire of the East** was proclaimed under a new emperor, Baldwin of Flanders, while Venice was awarded nearly half the city, numerous Mediterranean islands, and other territories. Although the Byzantine emperors relocated to **Byzantine Nicaea**, the Fourth Crusade marked the end of the Byzantine Empire as a true power, which discredited the Crusading movement and helped the Turks.

In the late 12th century, the Mongolian and Turkic nomads of the steppes were fearsome but disunited. Temujin (*c.*1162–1227), who later became known as **Genghis Khan**, was a minor leader who became a *nokhor* (companion) to Toghril, Khan of the Kereits, the dominant tribe in Central **Mongolia**. Through ability and charisma, he rose to become a great general, crushing the neighbouring **Tartar** tribes in 1202, but inciting resentment among other Kereits so that in 1203 he clashed with Toghril himself. He emerged from this confrontation as the dominant leader among the Mongol tribes.

Jayavarman VII (*c.*1125–1220) had returned from exile to claim the **Khmer** crown in 1181. He avenged the destruction of the capital by deposing the Champa king in 1191, suppressed a revolt in the west, restored Angkor, and finally gained ascendancy over the Champa kingdom. Jayavarman made **Mahayana Buddhism** the state religion and taxed the resources of the kingdom to build great temples, as well as hospitals, shrines, roads, and bridges. One of his temples, Preah Khan, was served by 98,000 retainers.

In around 1200, the **Chimú** state, centred on their capital at Chan Chan in the **Moche valley** in Peru, began to expand. Their power rested on their mastery of intensive agriculture techniques and elaborate irrigation. At Chan Chan, Chimú leaders built citadels, or palaces, high-walled buildings with audience chambers and storage depots. It is believed that each new Chimú ruler was obliged to build and fund his own citadel, which drove the expansion of the empire.

In 1202, the **mathematician** Leonardo of Pisa, better known as **Fibonacci** (*c.*1177–1250), produced the most influential book in European mathematics to date, the *Liber Abaci*, or *Book of Calculation*. Based on Arabic mathematics, it introduced Europe to Hindu numerals (0–9) and to the word *zephirum*, a Latinized version of an Arabic word that, in the Venetian dialect, became zero in algebra, addition, and the **Fibonacci Sequence**.

Jayavarman VII
This bronze statue of King Jayavarman VII, in Mahayana Buddhist style, portrays a serene and contemplative king.

Map of Genghis Khan's empire
Temujin would go on to unite the Mongol tribes and conquer a huge empire. His successors would extend it still further.

1206–10

Peterhouse college, Cambridge was founded 75 years after the university.

BY 1206, TEMUJIN HAD UNITED ALL THE TRIBES OF MONGOLIA into the *Khamag Mongol Ulus* "the All Mongol State", reorganizing tribal society into an army grouped on a decimal system. At the Mongolian capital of Karakorum, he took the title Chinggis Khan or "ruler of the world". The name is now most commenly spelled, "Genghis". In 1208, Pope Innocent III proclaimed a **crusade against heretics** in the south of France – the **Albigensians** (Cathars based around Albi) and **Waldenses** (see 1171–75). Their teachings challenged the worldliness of the established church, while their anticlericalism attracted nobles keen to appropriate church lands; the Cathars, for instance, were under the protection of Raymond of Toulouse, who ruled much of southern France. The pope's declaration gave license for the French king, Philip II (1165–1223), to allow his northern lords to wreak havoc in areas outside of

> **"KILL THEM ALL, GOD WILL KNOW HIS OWN."**
>
> **Abbot Arnaud Amaury,** on the Albigensian Crusade

c.1200 Emergence of **Chimú Empire** in Peru, centred on Chan Chan

c.1200 Khmer Empire reaches height under **Jayavarman VII**

1201 Establishment of **Riga** (in present-day Latvia)

1202 Fibonacci's book *Liber Abaci* produced

1202 King John of England battles Phillip II for his French lands

1201 Treaty of Venice makes provision for Fourth Crusade

1202 Crusaders take **Zara** in Dalmatia

1203 Temujin overcomes Toghril to become dominant **Mongolian leader**

1204 Establishment of **Latin Empire** under Baldwin I and partition of Byzantine Empire

1204 Crusaders sack **Constantinople**

1204 John of England loses most French territories of the Angevin Empire

1205 Hojo Yoshitoki becomes regent of Kamakura shogunate, inaugurating period of Hojo rule in Japan

1205 Second Bulgarian Empire defeats Latin Empire and captures Baldwin I

1206 Temujin takes title **Genghis Khan** and begins conquest of Asia

1206 Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Sultan of Delhi, founds dynasty of slave kings, India

1209 Pope Innocent III proclaims **Albigensian Crusade** in Languedoc, France

1209 Massacre of Beziers, Languedoc, by Crusaders

1211–15

This 19th-century oil painting depicts the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, said to have been the decisive battle of the Reconquista.

PERSECUTION OF THE CATHARS

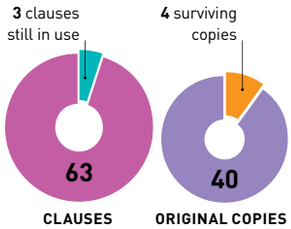
Although only 200 Cathars lived in the town of Beziers in Languedoc, Crusaders massacred the entire population in 1209. Asked how the attackers should distinguish between Catholics and heretics, crusade leader Abbot Amaury is reputed to have given his famous order to "kill them all". In its pursuit of Cathars, the papacy would eventually create the Inquisition (see 1231–35).

his control, preparing the way for an expansion of royal power.

In 1209, **Cambridge University was founded** by scholars who had relocated from Oxford. By 1226, they had aquired some formal organization.

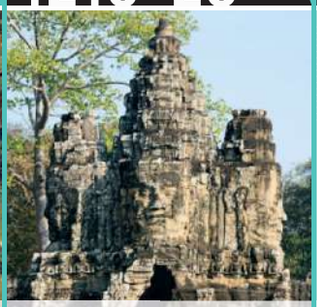
PETER II OF ARAGON (1178–1213) AND ALFONSO VIII OF CASTILE (1155–1214) defeated the **Almohads** (see 1146–50) at the **Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa** in 1212. Alfonso had earlier been crushingly defeated by the Almohads in 1195 but had fought off invasions by the other **Christian Spanish kingdoms** and rebuilt his army. After this decisive victory, the Almohads were soon expelled from Spain, leaving only local Muslim dynasties that could not stand up to the Christian advance. Accordingly, this battle is traditionally said to be a decisive point in the Christian reconquest or "**reconquista**" of Moorish Spain (see 1241–45).

Having lost most of his lands in France, **King John of England** (1166–1216) joined in alliance with Emperor Otto IV (1178–1215) and others, but they were crushed at the **Battle of Bouvines** in Flanders in 1214 by Philip II of France and the rival German emperor, Frederick II. This ended Anglo-Norman hopes of regaining French territories. King John's barons were forced to concentrate on England, where they had cause for discontent. Thanks to a dispute with the pope, the king had been briefly **excommunicated**. More importantly, he was taxing the barons heavily and invalidating the law when it suited him. The **barons revolted** and after a brief civil war, John was forced to sign the Articles of the Barons, known in history as the Great Charter or **Magna Carta**. Although this mainly concerned the rights of barons, in stating that the king was not above the law, it was an important milestone for human rights. King John immediately disowned the charter and war broke out once more, this time with added French involvement. Retreating from a French invasion force in 1216, the king lost his baggage train – and royal treasure – while crossing the Wash in Lincolnshire, England, and died soon after. His infant son, Henry III (1207–72) came to the throne.



The Magna Carta
Of the 63 clauses contained in the original Magna Carta, only three survive as laws today. Numerous copies were made, to be distributed around England; four survive.

1216–20



A detail from the south gate of the great Khmer city of Angkor Thom.

8 METRES
THE HEIGHT OF THE WALLS OF **ANGKOR THOM**

JAYAVARMAN VII DIED IN AROUND 1220, having seen his greatest creation take shape. At Angkor, in modern-day Cambodia he had created a new city, Angkor Thom, centred on the great state temple of Bayon. The temple comprises towers decorated with huge, sculpted faces; the identities of these are disputed, although they may include Jayavarman himself.

Having conquered most of Central Asia and northern China, Genghis Khan's empire (see 1201–05) now bordered the Khwarazm Empire of Persia.

Mongolian dagger
The Mongolians had a deservedly fearsome reputation. After archers had decimated the enemy, fighters with hand weapons would close in.

1221–25

"I AM THE PUNISHMENT OF GOD..."

Genghis Khan, Mongolian warlord

DOMINGO DE GUZMAN, A CASTILIAN CLERIC DIED IN 1221. In 1203, he had gone to Rome to ask permission to do missionary work with the Tartars (see 1201–10), but was sent to France to preach to the **Cathars of Languedoc** instead. By adopting absolute poverty, he was able to **challenge the Cathars** and make some headway, although ultimately his failure to "correct" the heretics led to the Albigensian Crusade (see 1206–10). However, like Francis of Assisi (see 1226–30), he had created a new kind of monastic order – the Dominicans – adapted to the new urban culture. The **Dominicans** and **Franciscans** were mendicant friars, mainly recruited from the middle classes, living off charity rather than farming, and devoted to preaching and charity in towns and cities.

A largely ineffective affair, the **Fifth Crusade** was the fruit of Pope Innocent's determination to reboot the Crusading movement. Targeting Egypt, the Crusaders took that but then lost Damietta, and failed to account for the Nile floods, which foiled their advance on Cairo. They high-handedly rejected a treaty offered by the sultan that would have given them Jerusalem, and left Egypt in 1221 having accomplished nothing.

1209 Founding of **Cambridge University**, England
1209 Francis of Assisi establishes **Franciscans**, Catholic religious order
1209 Otto IV elected Emperor
1210 **Hindu rebellions** against Sultanate of Delhi, India
1211 **Genghis Khan** conquers Kara-Khitai, Central Asia and invades Jin China
1211 **Civil strife** in Germany as **Frederick II** elected rival emperor to Otto IV
1212 **Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa**, Spain
1214 Philip II and Frederick II defeat anti-Capetian alliance at **Battle of Bouvines**, France
1215 **Magna Carta** signed following civil war in England
1215 **Fourth Lateran Council** calls halt to Albigensian Crusade and calls for a Fifth Crusade to Egypt
1215 **Genghis Khan** takes Beijing, China
1216 Death of **King John of England** (b.1166)
1218 Death of **Jayavarman VII** (b.1125)
1218 Genghis Khan invades **Khwarazmid Empire**, Western Asia
1220 **Khmer Empire** withdraws from Champa, Southeast Asia
1221 **Fifth Crusade** ends with loss of Damietta and retreat
1221 Death of **St Dominic** (b.1170) founder of the Dominicans
1221 Genghis Khan sacks **Samarkand**
1221 **Shokyu War** in Japan
1221 Toltecs expelled from **Chichen Itza**, Mexico
1222 Icelandic scholar **Snorri Sturlson** writes *Edda*, a book of Nordic mythology

1226–30

This 13th-century painting by Giotto di Bonodore shows St Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds.

1,000,000

THE NUMBER OF **PEOPLE KILLED** DURING THE **ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE**

THE RENEWAL OF THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE (see 1206–10) in 1226 was in spite of the Pope declaring an "official" end to the Crusade at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. In reality, the battle for the south of France descended into vicious guerrilla warfare. Renewal of the Crusade was followed eventually by the submission of Raymond VII, Count of Toulouse – the Cathars' protector. Under the **Treaty of Meaux** (also known as the Peace of Paris) of 1229, the town of Toulouse was ceded to the **Capetian dynasty** – the ruling house of France from 987 to 1328.

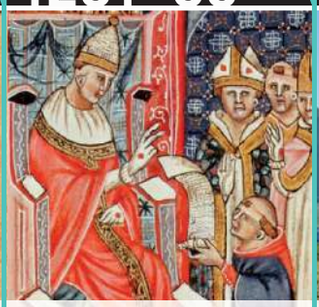
Cathar stronghold
The Cathar castle of Peyrepertuse in the Pyrenees was located in a strategic defensive position on the French–Spanish border.

Crusader coin
A rare Crusader coin from the Kingdom of Jerusalem illustrates the effects of intermingling policy: the inscription is written in Arabic.

Meanwhile, **Emperor Frederick II of Germany** realized that peace with the Muslims was better than unwinnable military adventures. In 1229, he concluded a treaty with the sultan of Egypt that **restored Jerusalem** and some surrounding land to the Christians. The **Sixth Crusade** thus passed without bloodshed, although Frederick was roundly condemned for this achievment.

A former soldier, **Francis of Assisi** had founded the **Franciscan order** in 1209 (see 1221–25). In 1224, he received the stigmata (the wounds of Christ), and he was canonized just two years after his death in 1226.

1231–35



This 14th-century image shows Pope Gregory IX receiving a list of heretics.

IN 1231, POPE GREGORY IX established the **Papal Inquisition**, a campaign by the church against heresy. Prior to 1231, the investigation of heresy had been the responsibility of bishops but it now became the preserve of specialist **inquisitors**, mostly drawn from the Dominican and Franciscan orders (see 1221–25). In 1233, the Dominicans were charged with bringing the Inquisition to Languedoc in France, where the **Cathar** heresy clung on despite the military defeat of the Count of Toulouse (see 1226–30).

Mongolian expansion continued, though Genghis Khan (see 1201–05) had died in 1227 while suppressing a rebellion in Xia Xia in China. He was succeeded by his second son, **Ogodei** (*c.*1186–1241), who was still more ambitious. Ogodei sent armies to the east and west, leading the final assault on the Chinese **Jin Empire** (see 1126–30), which was conquered by 1234. The **Southern Song** had aided the Mongol advance, but when they tried to seize Kaifeng in northern China in 1235, the Mongols turned on them.

In 1235, **Sundiata, king of the Keita**, a Mande people from sub-Saharan Mali, defeated the Susu king Sumnaguru at the **Battle of Kirina**. The Susu had destroyed the old Ghana Empire (*c.*830–1235), and Sundiata now built a new Mande empire on the ruins of Ghana.

1236–40

Steppe landscape; little changed since the days of the Mongol Empire.

ON HIS DEATH, GENGHIS KHAN had informally **divided his empire** between four of his sons. Given authority over the west, **Batu Khan** (*c.*1207–55) established the Kipchak Khanate, also known as the **Golden Horde Khanate**. In the winter of 1237, when the frozen rivers allowed his cavalry to cross, Batu **invaded Russia**. Over the next four years, his armies conquered the Russian principalities and blazed a trail of destruction deep into Central Europe. Under the overlordship of Ogodei (see 1231–35), the expanding reach of the Mongol Empire had important implications for pan-Eurasian trade. The ***Pax Mongolica*** or "Mongol Peace" achieved in the lands under Mongolian control made the perilous passage across Central Asia and the silk road increasingly viable, enabling the **first direct contact** between **Europeans and the Chinese** since Roman times in around 1240.

By 1236, the **Teutonic Knights** – a military order formed in 1198 by German merchants serving at the Hospital of St Mary of the Teutons in Jerusalem – had completed the subjugation of the **Pomeranians**, a pagan tribe in Prussia. Under their grand master, **Hermann von Salza** (*c.*1179–1239), the knights established numerous strongholds, and in 1237, they merged with the Livonian Brothers of the Sword and advanced into **Livonia** (present-day Estonia and Latvia).

1226 Renewal of **Albigensian Crusade** (to 1299)

1226 Genghis Khan destroys **Xia Xia**, China

1228–29 Emperor Frederick II regains Jerusalem by treaty during **Sixth Crusade**

1229 Treaty of Meaux ends Albigensian Crusade as Toulouse cedes to Capetians

1229 Establishment of **Assam Kingdom** in modern-day Vietnam

1226 Death of **St Francis of Assisi** (born *c.*1182)

1227 Death of **Genghis Khan**, Mongol emperor (born *c.*1162)

1229 Ayyubid Empire of Saladin reunited by **al-Kamil Muhammad**

1230 Teutonic Knights begin conquest of Prussia

1230 Establishment of **Nasrid dynasty** in Granada, Spain

1231 Pope Gregory IX commissions **Inquisition**

1233 Dominicans carry out Inquisition in Languedoc, France

1234 Mongols destroy **Jin dynasty**

1234 Louis IX of France begins personal rule after regency of his mother, Blanche of Castile

1235 Rise of the Mali Empire following **Battle of Kirina**, West Africa

1236 Teutonic Knights subjugate Pomeranians of Prussia

1237 Batu leads **Mongol army** into Russia

1238 Batu destroys Moscow, kills **Prince Juri**, founder of Moscow

1240 Batu **sacks Kiev**

1241–45

This miniature from the *Annalistic Code* of the 16th century depicts the "Battle of the Ice", fought on the frozen waters of Lake Peipus, Novgorod.

IN 1241, THE GERMAN TRADING TOWNS OF LUBECK AND HAMBURG formed an alliance to protect the **Baltic trade routes**. This was the first act in the formation of the **Hanseatic League** (from the medieval Latin *hansa*, meaning a group or association). Lübeck quickly became the centre of expanding German trade in the Baltic region, which extended along the Russian rivers as far as **Novgorod,** and linked to the European trading centres of **England and Flanders**.

In 1242, the efforts of the **Teutonic Knights** (see 1236–40) to extend their Livonian territories eastward and launch the conversion of the Russians from the Greek to the Roman church were checked by defeat at the **Battle of Lake Peipus**. Led by **Alexander Nevski**, prince of Novgorod, the Russians checked the knights' progress and Lake Peipus thereafter served as the eastern limit of Livonia.

Medieval trade
A manuscript illumination of the port of Hamburg, a founder member of the Hanseatic League, which had its roots in an alliance of 1241 with Lübeck.

In a series of stunning victories in Eastern and Central Europe, the **Mongol armies** destroyed all opposition. Early in 1241, an army of horsemen crossed the frozen River Vistula into Poland, sacking Kracow and defeating an alliance of **Poles, Silesians, and Teutonic Knights** at Leignitz in April. Just three days later, another force under **Batu** (see 1236–40) overwhelmed the Hungarian army in their camp at Mohi. By December, Batu was destroying Pest, the largest city in Hungary. The Mongols had reached the gates of Vienna when, in 1242, the news reached them that Ogodei, the Great Khan, had died. As was traditional, Batu withdrew his forces back to Karakorum, the Mongol capital, for the **election of a new leader.** Elsewhere, Mongol forces had penetrated the Indian subcontinent, sacking Lahore in 1241.

In 1244, **Jerusalem**, which had been under partial Christian control since Frederick II's treaty with the sultan of Egypt (see 1226–30), was **lost to medieval Christians** for the final time. The Egyptian sultan, Ayyub, was engaged in a contest with the Syrian branch of the **Ayyubids** (see 1171–75) at Damascus, which had allied itself with the Christian Crusader kingdoms. In 1244, Ayyub's forces overran Jerusalem and **expelled the Christians**.

RECONQUISTA

The notion of the *Reconquista* – the Christian reconquest of Islamic Spain – as a single, continuous project, is a myth, first created by clerical propagandists in the 14th century. In practice, the advance of the Christian kingdoms was by degrees, driven by the need for land, and facilitated by Muslim dissention and advances in military technology.

1246–50

In this 16th-century painting, Ferdinand III, King of Castile and Lon, accepts the surrender of the city of Seville from the Moors in 1248.

IN 1247, FERDINAND III OF CASTILE AND LEON (c.1199–1252) laid siege to the Moorish city of Seville. It fell to him in 1248, and with it the **last Moorish kingdom in Spain** – with the exception of Granada. Here, Mohammad ibn-Yusuf ibn Nasr had established the **Nasrid dynasty** in 1230. By 1238, the Nasrids had begun to reconstruct an old fortress, the **Alhambra**, which would become one of the wonders of world architecture by the mid-14th century (see 1350–55). In 1246, the emir of Granada agreed to become Ferdinand's vassal, but the last relic of Moorish al-Andalus would resist Christian pressure until 1492 (see 1490–92).

Louis IX of France (1214–70) was much respected throughout Europe and had a reputation for justice. Under his reign, royal control was extended to the Mediterranean, and the previously autonomous realms of Languedoc and Provence would become part of **French Capetian** territories. In 1244, Louis "took the cross", embarking on a crusade in 1248. Theobald of Navarre had launched a crusade in 1239, but it was so unsuccessful that it is not usually recognized as an ordinate crusade; Louis' crusade of 1248 is accounted the **Seventh**, the last Crusade of this magnitude ever undertaken. Louis landed in Egypt and took Damietta without opposition, but in 1250 his army was **destroyed by the Egyptians** at Fariskur and he was taken captive. His mother, Blanche of Castile, raised a large ransom to buy his freedom.

The **Mamluks** (or Mamelukes) of Egypt were slave soldiers captured from Turkic and Circassian tribes (of the Pontic–Caspian steppes), who formed the main component of the Ayyubid army. Eventually they became strong enough to take power for themselves, **murdering Turan Shah**, the last Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, in 1250. At first the Mamluk commander Izz-ad-Din Aybak used the sultan's widow as a puppet ruler, but he soon married her and founded the **Mamluk dynasty**, the first slave dynasty to hold power in its own name.

THE CRUSADES

1096–99 **FIRST** CRUSADE
1145–49 **SECOND** CRUSADE
1189–92 **THIRD** CRUSADE
1202–04 **FOURTH** CRUSADE
1213–21 **FIFTH** CRUSADE
1228–29 **SIXTH** CRUSADE
1248–54 **SEVENTH** CRUSADE

1241 **Mongols** ravage **Europe** and sack Lahore in northern **India**

1241 Formation of **Hanseatic League**

1242 **Battle of Lake Peipus**: Alexander Nevski defeats **Teutonic Knights**

1243 Battle of Köse Dag: **Mongols defeat Seljuk Rum** of Anatolia

1244 **Fall of Montsegur**, last great stronghold of the **Cathars**

1246 **Provence** becomes part of Capetian France

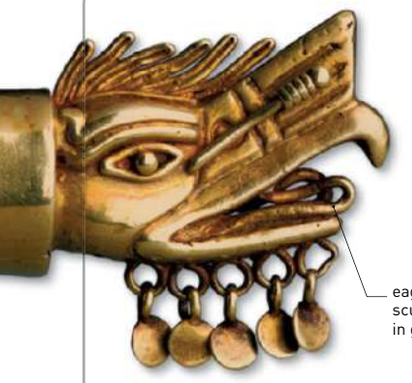
1248 Cologne cathedral burns down; reconstructed in **gothic style**

1248 Ferdinand III completes conquest of al-Andalus, apart from Granada, with successful **siege of Seville**

1248 **Seventh Crusade**: Louis IX of France lands in Egypt

1249 Franciscan friar **Roger Bacon** records recipe for **gunpowder**

1250 **Mamluk dynasty** founded in Egypt



Lip ornament
MIXTEC
This eagle-shaped lip plug, or labret, would have been worn by a member of the Aztec elite. The Mixtec, a conquered tribe, made most Aztec gold jewellery.

Human mask
AZTEC
Found at the Great Temple of the Aztecs in their capital Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), this greenstone mask was a votive offering.

Warrior effigy pot
MOCHE
This pot from the Moche culture of the north coast of Peru shows a warrior in a head-dress grasping a club. Constant warfare was a way of life.

Obsidian knife
AZTEC
Long-bladed, razor-sharp obsidian knives such as this one were used by warriors and in the gory human sacrifices practised by the Aztecs.

Maquahuitl
AZTEC
Lacking iron or steel, pre-Columbian Americans used obsidian (volcanic glass) to form cutting edges. The *maquahuitl* – a wooden club fringed with obsidian blades – was a common Aztec weapon.

THE AZTECS, INCAS, AND MAYA

THE EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTIC TRADITIONS OF PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA THAT SPANNED MILLENNIA

The Incas, Aztecs, and Maya were advanced civilizations with sophisticated arts and crafts and highly developed graphic systems. The artefacts they created dazzled the medieval European invaders and still fascinate today.

The art and culture of the pre-Columbian civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andes represent the height of ancient traditions stretching back to the 4th millennium BCE. The conquistadors had a devastating effect on these cultures, but the artefacts that survive are a testament to their rich heritage. Much of Incan culture came from client states, such as the Moche, while the Aztecs and Mayans derived theirs from older cultures, such as the Olmecs.

Sun stone
AZTEC
This sun stone, or calendar stone, is the largest Aztec sculpture ever found. It represents the Aztecs' mythical history of the universe. The Sun, believed to have been formed in the most recent era of creation, is at the centre.

Xipe Totec, god of the springtime
TEOTIHUACAN
The name of this grisly god translates as "our flayed lord"; he is depicted wearing the skin of a sacrificial victim, denoting the spring renewal of the Earth's "skin".

Priceless heart
AZTEC
The heart was considered the most precious organ that could be offered to the gods, and this replica was carved in jade, which the Aztecs regarded as their most valuable substance.

Necklace
INCA
Turquoise was highly valued by the Incas (Aztecs and Mayans preferred jade and other greenstones), and this rare necklace is made from beads of gold, turquoise, and red shell.

Tomb figurine
INCA
This cast gold figurine representing an Inca god made up part of the grave goods interred in the tomb of a high-status individual.

Decorative plate
MAYA
This plate from the Yucatan Maya shows hunting scenes – in the centre, a hunter drapes a deer he has caught across his head and shoulders, while around the edges other hunters wear deer masks.

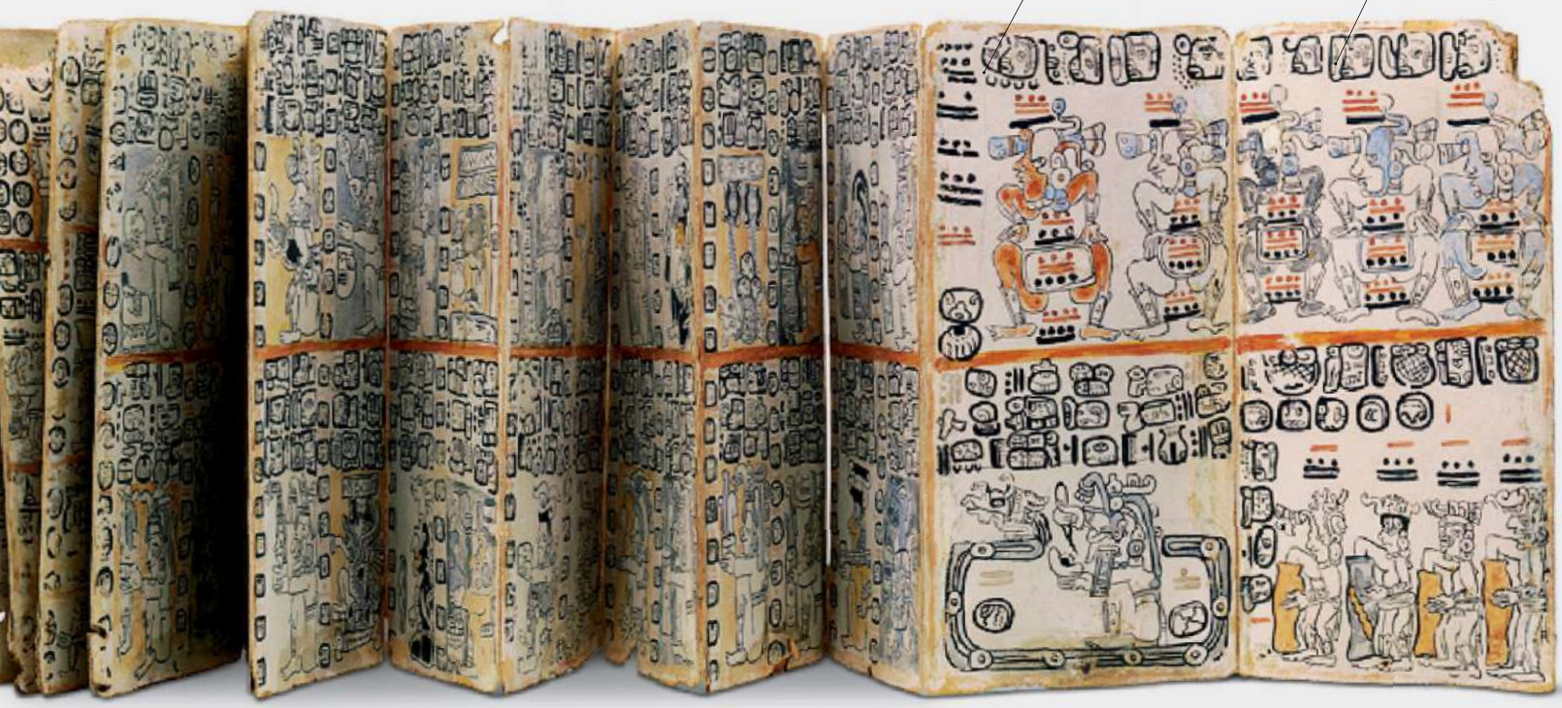
Panpipes
INCA
Known in Europe as the syrinx, the panpipes were among the most common Inca musical instruments. This unusual set is made of quills from the feathers of a condor.

Greenstone yoke
AZTEC
Yokes were worn as protective belts in the sacred ball game *ulama*, played by most Mesoamerican cultures. This ornate yoke was probably a ceremonial replica.

Counting device
INCA
This *quipu*, or counting device, was a versatile accounting tool that helped the Incas keep track of the tribute and population of their empire – data was recorded in lengths of string and knots.

Codex Tro-Cortesianus
MAYA
One of only four surviving Mayan codices, this one records instructions for divination (predicting the future) and priestly rituals. Sheets of bark paper were coated in gesso (chalky paste) to form a writing surface.

Jaina figurine
MAYA
This pottery figure from the island of Jaina shows a powerful man dressed in all his finery, with a heavy bead necklace, massive head-dress, and ear plugs.



1251–55

Although not as sophisticated as Mayan hieroglyphs, Aztec pictographs such as the one shown could express simple concepts.

BY THE MID-13TH CENTURY, THE MEXICA TRIBE – better known today as the **Aztecs** – were established in the Valley of Mexico. Aztec legend suggests that they migrated from the ancestral homeland of *Aztlan* in the early 12th century. Settling at Chapultepec, near Lake Texcoco, Mexico, in around 1250, they were soon **expelled by the Tepanecs**, one of the tribal confederations competing for dominance in the wake of the **Toltec collapse** in the early 12th century.

Although the **Mongols** had conquered most of the Russian principalities (see 1236–40), and the **Golden Horde Khanate** had claimed authority over **Russia**, surprisingly little changed for the Russians. In return for tribute and military service, the Russian princes were left in power and the Russian Church was not interfered with. **Alexander Nevski** (*c.*1220–63), the prince of Novgorod who had led the Russians to victory against the **Teutonic Knights** in 1242, became the dominant Russian noble, appointed Grand Duke of Vladimir after his brother was driven out by the Mongols.

Under the support of the new **Great Khan**, Mongke (r.1251–59), his brothers Kublai and Hulagu renewed the **Mongol expansion**.

In 1253, Hulagu led a huge army into Western Asia to conquer the **Great Seljuk sultanate** (see 1031–40), while Kublai launched campaigns against the **Southern Song** and the **Kingdom of Nanchao** in China.

Prince of Novgorod
This statue depicts Russian leader, Alexander Nevski, whose name derives from the Russian victory at the Battle of the River Neva.

1256–60

This illustration of Mongols battling the Seljuks is from a chronicle by Rashid al-Din, a Muslim minister in the service of the Il-Khanate.

HULAGU KHAN (SEE 1251–1255) CONTINUED HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SELJUKS and other Islamic powers. In 1256, he crushed the **Order of the Assassins** (see 1081–90), taking their stronghold at Alamut in Persia. In 1258, he sacked Baghdad and **executed the Abbasid Caliph** – the figurehead of Islam – in just one of countless atrocities committed by Mongol invaders who massacred hundreds of thousands of Muslims during their campaigns. In 1259, Hulagu penetrated deep into Syria, but as with Batu's campaign in Europe 18 years earlier (see 1241–45), his progress was halted by news of the **death of the Great Khan**, and he withdrew his armies while he returned to the Mongolian capital to help select a new leader.

Taking advantage of Hulagu's withdrawal, the **Mamluk** general **al-Zahir Baybars** marched north and struck at the Mongol garrisons in Syria. At the **Battle of Ayn Jalut** in Palestine, General Baybars **defeated the Mongols** and expelled them from Palestine and Syria. On his return to Egypt he murdered the sultan and took his place. Distracted by dynastic struggles, and later by a protracted inter-khanate war, Hulagu was not able to regain his Syrian conquests and the westward expansion of the Mongol Empire was halted. **Hulagu's conquests**, which encompassed Iran, Iraq, most of Anatolia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, became the **Il-Khanate**, or Ilkhanate. Meanwhile, the Mamluks gave refuge to a **fugitive Abbasid prince**, setting him up in Cairo as the **new caliph**. Recognized as guardians of the Islamic faith, the **Mamluks** were formally made **sultans of Egypt, Syria,** and the **Levant**.

Alfonso X of Castile (r.1252–1284) won the nickname "the Wise" thanks to his learning, patronage of the arts and Castilian literature, sponsorship of natural philosophy, and judicial reforms. He oversaw the final expulsion of the **Almohads** (see 1121–25) from Spain in 1257.

KUBLAI KHAN (1215–94)

The grandson of Genghis Khan, Kublai spent eight years campaigning in southern China before succeeding his brother Mongke as Great Khan in 1260. His own kingdom, the Great Khanate, encompassed Mongolia and China, where he founded the Yuan dynasty, moved the capital to Shangdu, and did much to foster trade and international links.

> "HAD I BEEN PRESENT **AT THE CREATION, I WOULD HAVE GIVEN** SOME USEFUL **HINTS FOR** THE BETTER **ORDERING OF** THE **UNIVERSE.**"
>
> **Alfonso X, the Wise,** on the Ptolemaic system

c.1250s Aztecs settle in Valley of Mexico

1252 Alexander Nevski (1220–1263) becomes leading prince in Russia

1252 Formation of leagues of **pro-Guelph** and **pro-Ghibelline cities**, Italy

1253 Kublai Khan (1215–1294) conquers Nanchao, China, triggering migration of Thai people

1253 Hulagu Khan (*c.*1217–1265) begins conquest of Islamic lands

1254 Louis IX of France departs Crusader kingdom of Acre, Western Asia

1254 Civil war in **Crusader states**, Western Asia

1254 Death of **Conrad IV** of Germany (b.1228)

1254 Manfred of Sicily launches anti-papal campaign following Pope Innocent IV's claims on Sicily

1254 Teutonic Knights found **Konigsberg**, Prussia

1256 Hulegu Khan crushes **Assassins** at Alamut, Persia

1257 Berber-Muslim **Almohads** expelled from Spain

1257 Alfonso X, the Wise, elected Holy Roman Emperor

1258 English barons force Henry III to agree to **Provisions of Oxford**

1258 Mongols destroy **Baghdad**; execute **Abbasid Caliph**

1258 Kublai Khan invades Southern Song China and Korea

1260 Mongols enter **Damascus**, Syria, but Hulegu forced to retreat due to dynastic dispute

1260 Mamluks under Baybar I destroy Mongols at **Ayn Jalut**, Palestine

1260 Mamluks recognized as sultans of Syria, Levant, and Egypt

1260 Kublai Khan elected **Great Khan** but forced to defend crown in civil war

1260 Prussian uprising against Teutonic Knights

1261–65

This example of Mamluk architecture from the height of the sultanate adorns the entrance to the mausoleum of Qalawun in Cairo, Egypt.

ITALIAN NOBLEMAN AND LATER DOMINICAN MONK, THOMAS AQUINAS (1225–74) became one of the most important philosophers in the history of Western thought. Renowned for his work in **uniting faith and reason**, Aquinas's period of greatest productivity occurred between 1258 and 1273, when he penned his two best-known works, the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*.

In 1261, Michael VIII Paleologus (r.1259–61), the Byzantine emperor of Nicaea, concluded the **Treaty of Nymphaeum** with the Genoese, agreeing to cede them all the trading privileges once enjoyed by the Venetians (see 981–990). He had already secured an alliance with the Bulgarians, and was now poised to achieve his dream of re-taking Constantinople from the **Latin Empire** (Constantinople and environs, captured from the Byzantines during the fourth crusade), and reconstituting the Byzantine Greek Empire. In July 1261, a Byzantine army took advantage of the absence of the Venetian fleet to cross the Bosporus strait and take Constantinople. The Latin emperor, Baldwin II fled, and the **Paleologus Empire** was established.

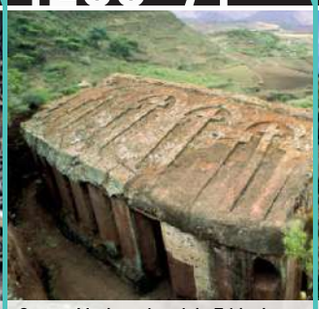
Paleologus would campaign tirelessly to restore lost Byzantine lands.

The **Second Baron's War** in England between 1264 and 1267 was brought about by a combination of newly kindled national consciousness and resentment at foreign interference. **Henry III** of England (r.1216–72) had introduced many foreign officers into government and taxed the English heavily to fund overseas adventures and papal extortion. Rebels led by **Simon de Montfort**, Earl of Leicester, captured the king at Lewes in 1265 and summoned the first European parliament that included elected representatives.

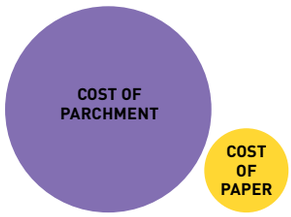
Meanwhile, the **Mamluks** began a push to rid the Holy Land of the Crusader kingdoms once and for all.

Thomas Aquinas
This 15th-century altarpiece depicts Thomas Aquinas, whose philosophy still underpins Catholic dogma.

1266–71



Geneta Mariam church in Ethiopia, built during the Solomonid era.



Cost of paper versus parchment
After paper-making technology was introduced to Italy, the cost of vegetable-based paper fell to 1/6 of the cost of animal-based parchment.

THE SOLOMONID DYNASTY IN ETHIOPIA was founded in 1270 by Yekuno Amlak, displacing the previous Zagwe dynasty, and claiming to have restored the legitimate line of the ancient Christian kings of Aksum. Amlak claimed descent from the biblical Solomon, via the possibly Ethiopian Queen of Sheba.

The town of **Fabriano** in Italy lies close to the Adriatic port of Ancona, which was notable in the 13th century for trade with the Muslim world. This is probably how paper manufacture became established there in the 1270s. Use of animal gelatin in place of more degradable vegetable gel made Fabriano paper more durable, and the town became the principal paper manufacturing site in Europe.

In 1270, Louis IX of France made another attempt at crusading, but on the request of Charles of Anjou, **the Eighth Crusade** was diverted to Tunis where disease killed Louis and his army.

1272–75

Former stronghold of the Knights Hospitaller, Krak des Chevaliers or "fortress of the knights" in Syria was taken by the Mamluks and fortified further.

Travels of Marco Polo
To reach China, Marco Polo travelled through Anatolia, Iran, and Afghanistan. On his return, he sailed to Hormuz in Persia via Sumatra.

IN 1271, THE VENETIAN MERCHANT AND EXPLORER, MARCO POLO (c. 1254–1324), travelled to China. Arriving at Kublai Khan's court in 1275, the Great Khan employed Marco Polo in various capacities. In 1292, he escorted a Mongol princess to Persia, returning to Italy three years later and writing a **travel memoir** while a prisoner of the Genoese. Polo's memoir, *The Travels* – known by Italians as *Il Milione*, because of the belief that it contains a million lies – is a fascinating portrait of the Mongolian Empire at its height. The *Pax Mongolica* (see 1236–40) allowed freedom of movement through lands under the authority of **Il-khanate**, and it was said that a virgin with a pot of gold on her head could pass unmolested from Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) to Beijing.

In 1272, **Edward Plantagenet** (r.1272–1307), heir apparent to the English throne, returned from the **Holy Land**, having forced the **Mamluks** to conclude a 10-year truce in his attempts to destroy Acre, one of the last remaining Crusader footholds in Outremer. The Mamluks had already taken the apparently impregnable **Krak des Chevaliers** from the Knights Hospitaller in 1271.

22 PER CENT THE **WORLD LAND AREA** COVERED BY THE **MONGOL EMPIRE** AT ITS HEIGHT

1261 Genoese–Byzantine **Treaty of Nymphaeum**
1261 Fall of **Latin Empire** and restoration of **Byzantine Empire**
1262 Civil war in Mongol Empire between **Golden Horde** and **Il-Khanate**
1263 **Mamluks** begin push to drive Crusaders out of Levant
1264 **Thomas Aquinas** completes *Summa contra Gentiles*
1264 **Second Baron's War** in England (to 1267)
1265 First **representative English parliament** summoned
1265 **Charles of Anjou**, brother of the French king, accepts crown of Sicily
1265 **Simon de Montfort** killed at Battle of Evesham, England (b. 1208)
1266 Philosopher **Roger Bacon** (c.1214–94) writes treatise on natural science, *Opus Maius*
1268 **Mamluks** take Jaffa and Antioch, Crusader States
1269 Death of **Jatavarman Sundara**, ruler of South India and Ceylon
1270 Death of **Louis IX** of France during Eighth Crusade (b. 1214)
1270 **Solomonid dynasty** founded in Ethiopia
1271 **Marco Polo** leaves Venice for China
1272 **Edward Plantagenet** returns to England to become king having signed peace treaty with Mamluks
1273 Work starts on **Nasrid Alhambra Palace** in Granada, Spain
1274 **Council of Lyons** attempts to end **schism** between Catholic and Byzantine Churches
1274 Kublai Khan's first attempt to invade **Japan** fails
1274 **Rudolf I** becomes first Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor
1275 **Marco Polo** arrives in China

1276–85

Statues adorn the Meenakshi Temple at Madurai, in India. Originally constructed by Kulasekhara Pandya, the temple was destroyed by Muslim invaders and later rebuilt.

IN SOUTHERN INDIA, KING KULASEKHARA I (r.1268–1308) expanded the empire of the **Pandyas** to its greatest extent. The Pandyas were an ancient **Tamil** people of the far south, who contended for supremacy over the centuries with neighbouring kingdoms such as the **Cholas** and the island of **Ceylon** (Sri Lanka). Under **Sundara** (r.1251–68) the Pandya empire had expanded dramatically and reduced some neighbouring states to vassalage. His son **Kulasekhara** went on to conquer Kerala, Kongu, and Ceylon, and in 1279 he defeated the last **Chola** king, **Rajendra III**, and annexed his territories. The greatness of the Pandya court was attested to by Venetian merchant, **Marco Polo**, who would pass through in 1293, but the empire was short-lived, breaking up in the early 14th century due to family quarrels and **Muslim invasions**.

By the late 13th century, the **Maori** had settled in **New Zealand** – with the exception of Antarctica, the last land mass to be colonized by humans. Dating the Maori colonization is contentious. According to estimates based on Maori traditions, the first **Polynesians** visited the islands in the early 10th century, and waves of colonization climaxed with the arrival of the **Great Fleet** of ocean-going canoes in 1350. Archaeological findings tell a slightly different story. However, it seems likely that Polynesians, probably from **Tahiti**, arrived in New Zealand around 1280, dividing the territory between **hapu** (clans). Hapu that traced a common ancestry formed **iwi** (tribes), some of which could trace their lineage back to a single **waka houra** (ocean-going canoe).

Having conquered Korea and most of China, **Kublai Khan** (1215–94) set his sights on **Japan**, sending embassies demanding submission as early as 1268. Under the bold leadership of the **Hojo regency**, the Japanese refused to be cowed. After a failed invasion attempt in 1274, Kublai sent **150,000 men** in two huge fleets in 1281, but the Japanese held off the invading armada until a great typhoon, known in Japan as the **kamikaze** ("divine wind"), devastated the Mongol fleet.

Divine wind
An engraving shows the destruction of the Mongol fleet by the kamikaze ("divine wind") in 1281.

MAORI CARVING

Maori culture is noted for its tradition of arts and crafts; chief among these is Te Toi Whakairo (carving). Master craftsmen were believed to channel the voices of the spirits and ancestors, and intricately carved posts and lintels adorning structures around the marae (sacred space) and waka (canoes) were believed to accumulate and pass on mana (spiritual power).

1286–90

Guglielmo Berardi da Narbona was killed at the Battle of Campaldino.

IN THE 1280S, A TRIBE OF TURKOMAN NOMADIC HORSEMEN and raiders based in northwestern Anatolia, known as the **Ottomans**, elected **Osman** (1258–1354) as their chieftain. At this time, the political map of Anatolia was fractured: the Mongol onslaught had broken up Seljuk Rum and replaced it with many small principalities, while also driving waves of Muslim refugees into the region. Meanwhile, the **Byzantine Empire** had been successively **reduced** and broken up by Seljuk and Latin encroachment. Osman was able to lead his tribe in a **territorial expansion**, rapidly conquering Byzantine territory.

Florence, like many other Italian cities, had developed into a largely **autonomous republic** or commune. It was typically easier for the German emperors – the notional feudal overlords – to grant cities powers of self-government than try to control them directly. Since the mid-13th century, Florence had see-sawed violently between **Guelph** and **Ghibelline** regimes (see 1221–25). This **Guelph–Ghibelline** conflict had gripped the Italian city-states, providing a vehicle for the expression of local **class tensions** as well as national and international politics. When one faction gained the upper hand in a city, the other was typically expelled. In the 1280s, the Guelphs had the upper hand, and Guelph partisans exiled from Arezzo encouraged them to take up arms against the rival city. The Florentines defeated Arezzo at the

1276 **Treaty of Vienna**: Rudolf I of Germany makes Vienna the capital of **Hapsburg lands**

1278 **Otto Visconti** comes to power in Milan

1279 Formation of the **Guelph Tuscan League**

1279 **Kulasekhara of Pandya** defeats the last Chola king

1279 Kublai Khan completes the **conquest of Southern Song** by destroying their fleet at Macau

c.1280 **Maori** colonization of New Zealand

c.1280s **Osman** elected chieftain by Turkoman tribesmen; **Ottoman dynasty** founded

1281 **Battle of Homs**: Mamluks defeat Mongol–Knights Hospitaller alliance

1281 Under the influence of Charles of Anjou, **Pope Martin IV** renounces the union of Byzantine and Roman churches

1281 **Kamikaze** (typhoon) destroys Kublai Khan's Japanese invasion fleet

1282 **Sicilian Vespers Revolt** against Angevin rule; Sicily is offered to **Peter III of Aragon**

1284 Genoese fleet defeats Angevin navy off Naples, and destroys the **Pisan fleet** off Meloria

1284 Venice issues regulations regarding **spectacles** – possibly invented there in 1280

1285 Having completed the conquest of Prussia, **Teutonic Knights** begin an assault on Lithuania

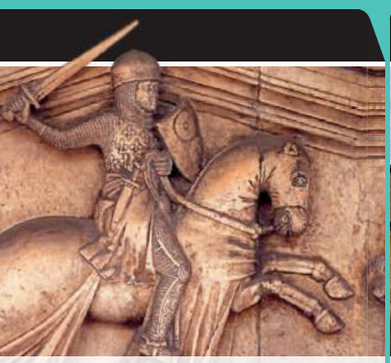
1286 Kublai Khan's army defeated by **Dai Viet**; he abandons plans to invade Japan

1286 Kublai Khan's army destroys **Pagan Empire** (present-day Burma)

c.1286 Compilation of the **Zohar** (a collection of Jewish Kabbalah literature)

1287 The Genoese defeat Venetian fleet off **Acre**

1291–95



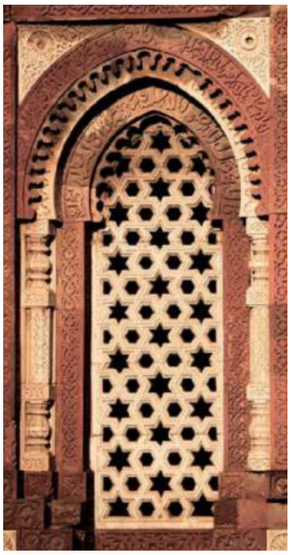
The Eleanor Cross at Geddington, Northamptonshire, England, features an ogee arch, marking a milestone for the English Gothic style.

1296–1300

William Wallace was outlawed for killing one of Edward's sheriffs in 1296. He was one of the first men to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Battle of Campaldino, heralding the start of a period of **Florentine dominance** in Tuscany. Among those battling on the Florentine side was the poet **Dante Alighieri** (see 1311–17).

The line of Slave Kings of Delhi came to an end in 1290 with the seizure of power by **Firuz** of the **Khalji Turks** – a tribe living in Afghanistan – thus founding the **Khalji dynasty**. Firuz is best remembered for releasing into Bengal **1,000 Thugs** or Thuggees, cult followers of the goddess Kali devoted to **murder and robbery** in her name.



Ornate Mughal screen
This screen from the main gateway of the Qutb complex in Delhi was built by the Khalji sultan Ala-ud-din, murderer and successor of Firuz.

IN 1291, AFTER A DESPERATE SIX-WEEK SIEGE, the **Mamluks** took Acre, the last major Crusader stronghold in **Palestine**, and a few months later they took Beirut, the last remnant of the Crusader kingdom known as **Outremer** (see 1181–85). After nearly 200 years, Christian presence in the Holy Land was extinguished, and the Mamluks **plundered the region** to deter future Crusades.

To limit the risk of disastrous fires, **Venice** moved its **glass-making industry** to the island of Murano in 1291. Venetian glass makers were the only ones in Europe to master the art of producing **clear glass**. Their expertise in working with glass had earlier born fruit in the invention of **spectacles** (see 1284).

Edward I of England (r.1272–1307) had married **Eleanor of Castile** in 1254. Though unpopular with the English, she and Edward enjoyed a happy marriage, and he was devastated when she died in 1290. The following year he ordered the erection of 12 so-called **Eleanor crosses** to mark the passage of her funeral cortege to London.

The contest for **mastery of the Mediterranean** between **Genoa** and **Venice** continued, with a Genoese fleet defeating the Venetians off **Laiazzo** in 1294. The following year, Genoa put together a **huge fleet**, with the aim of landing a killer blow. However, despite a formal challenge being made, it was not engaged. Developments in Venetian shipbuilding, however, were underway. Capable of carrying more cargo and a larger crew, the construction of the first of the great galleys in 1294 heralded a distinct advantage for the Venetians.

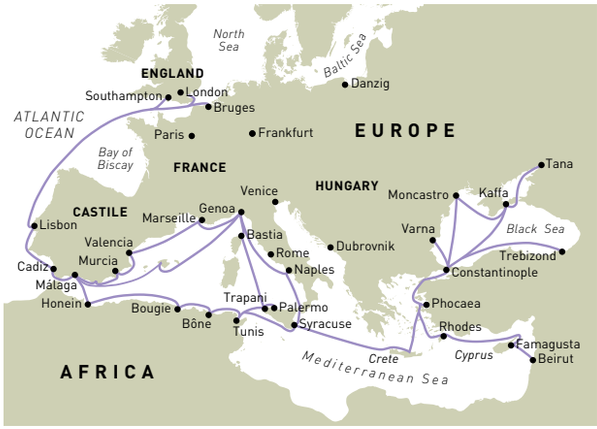
Murano glass
This Murano glass vessel dates to around 1330. As well as increasing fire safety, concentrating the glass industry on an island helped to regulate it and guard its secrets.

165
THE NUMBER OF **GALLEYS** IN THE 1295 FLEET OF **GENOA**

THE EXTINCTION OF THE CANMORE DYNASTY, followed by dissent among the Scottish nobles, had allowed **Edward I** to exercise increasing dominance over the Scots, and in 1292 he awarded the crown to **John Baliol**. However, in 1295, Baliol made an alliance with England's enemy, **France**. The following year Edward launched a campaign to **subdue the Scots**, defeating them at Dunbar, and taking the **Stone of Destiny** – the Scottish coronation stone – back to London. In 1297, the Scottish nationalist **William Wallace** (c.1272–1305) led a revolt against English dominance, overcoming a larger English army at **Stirling Bridge**, but he was defeated at **Falkirk** in 1298 and forced into years of guerrilla warfare and overseas fundraising.

1:4 **Battle of Stirling Bridge**
Under William Wallace, an estimated 2,500 Scots defeated a much larger force of English soldiers (numbering up to 10,000) at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

The **Genoese–Venetian naval conflict** continued, with battles in the Black Sea and the Greek islands. At the **Battle of Curzola**, in 1298, the Genoese fleet inflicted a **disastrous defeat** on the Venetians, destroying all but a few of their ships and killing up to 7,000 men.



Genoese trade routes
The Genoese opened a lucrative trade route to the North Sea, and competed with Venice to dominate trade with the Byzantines and the East.

KEY
— Trade routes

1287 Mongol invasion of Punjab halted at **Lahore**
1289 **Mamluks** take Tripoli
1289 **Battle of Campaldino**; Florence is dominant in Tuscany
1290 Firuz founds the **Khalji dynasty** of the Sultanate of Delhi

1291 Mamluks take **Acre**; end of Crusader kingdoms in Palestine
1291 Venetian glass industry moves to **Murano**
1291 Edward I builds **Eleanor crosses** in England
1292 Marco Polo travels to **Java** with Kublai Khan's fleet
1292 Edward of England nominates **John Baliol** as king of Scotland in face of Scottish opposition
1294 **Kublai Khan** dies (b.1215)
1295 Ghazan becomes Ilkhan, makes **Islam** the state religion of the Ilkhanate
1295 **Marco Polo** returns to Italy, and is captured by the Genoese
1295 **Genoese** build massive fleet

1296 Chiang Mai founded as capital of new **Thai kingdom** of Lan Na
1297 Venetians sack Genoese port in **Crimea**; Genoese ravage **Crete** and massacre Venetian merchants in the Byzantine Empire
1297 Scots, under William Wallace, win **Battle of Stirling Bridge**
1297 Sultan of Delhi conquers **Gujarat**
1298 Scottish nationalists defeated at **Battle of Falkirk**
1298 Genoese defeat Venetians at **Curzola**; **Matteo Visconti** negotiates a peace treaty between the two powers
1298 First mention of a **spinning wheel** in Europe
1300 France takes control of **Flanders**

1301–10

Domenico di Michelino's painting *The Comedy Illuminating Florence*, depicts Dante, the city of Florence, and scenes from the *Divine Comedy*.

ALTHOUGH THE GHIBELLINES HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM FLORENCE (see 1286–90), factionalism still plagued the city, with a drawn-out **power struggle** between the old aristocratic nobility, the new mercantile nobles, and the powerful guilds. The **Guelph** faction split into Black (extreme) and White (moderate) parties. In 1301, the Whites expelled the Blacks, only for them to return when **Charles, count of Valois**, entered the city. The following year the Black Guelphs sentenced the Whites to death or exile – among them the poet **Dante Alighieri** (see panel, right).

In 1301, **Pope Boniface VIII** (c.1235–1303) supposedly issued a bull asserting **papal supremacy** over France. In fact, the bull was a forgery, put out by the French king **Philip IV the Fair** (r.1285–1314) to stir up animosity against the pope. Philip "responded" by calling one of the first **Estates General** – including representatives of the towns and clergy – and received their backing. Boniface **excommunicated** Philip and Philip called for the Pope to face **criminal charges**. In 1303, agents acting for Philip forced their way into the papal apartments in Anagni and **arrested the Pope**, who died soon after. Facing tumultuous conditions in Italy, in 1303 the cardinals elected the archbishop of Bordeaux as **Pope Clement V**. Although hoping to establish himself in Italy when the violence subsided, Clement remained in southern France, finally settling in **Avignon** in 1309, then owned by the king of Naples. This temporary arrangement for the papacy would last until 1378.

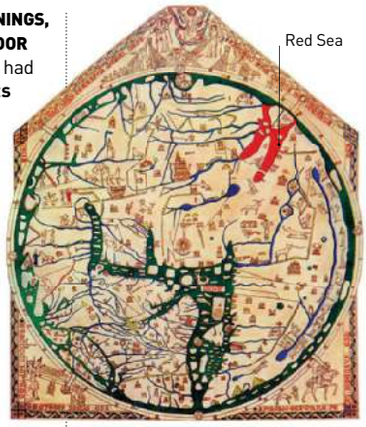
Palais des Papes
Situated on a rocky outcrop, the papal palace in Avignon is one of the largest and most important medieval Gothic buildings in Europe.

1311–17

> **"LET EVIL SWIFTLY BEFALL THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGLY CONDEMNED US – GOD WILL AVENGE US."**
>
> **Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the Knights Templar,** cursing King Philip and Pope Clement V, 1314

The torture of Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Knights Templar.

FROM THEIR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, WHEN THEY HAD BEEN SO POOR that two knights sometimes had to share a horse, the **Knights Templar** had risen to dizzying heights. With the backing of Cistercian abbot **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090–1153), and subsequently the Pope, they had won exemption from secular jurisdiction and taxation, and thrived as donations of land and money poured in. By the 13th century they had become **de facto bankers** to much of Europe, able to direct a large fleet and maintain the primary **Crusader army** in Outremer. Templar knights rose to prominence all over Europe, especially in England, where the **Master of the Temple** was the first baron of the realm. In the early 13th century, then **Master William Marshal** ruled the country as regent for the young king **Henry III** (1207–72). However, after the **fall of Outremer**, the Templars were struggling to stay afloat, and presented an easy target for their enemy, **Philip IV of France**. Philip coveted the Templar lands and cooked up charges of **heresy** in which to indict them. On 13 October 1307, Philip's officials simultaneously **arrested every Templar in France**. They were accused of a **variety of crimes**, including sexual and occult outrages and worshipping an idol. The **use of torture** obtained lurid confessions, and over the next few years around **60 Templars were executed**. Elsewhere in Europe, some arrests were made, but there was much less appetite for condemning the order. At the **Council of Vienne** (1311–12), Philip forced Pope Clement to **dissolve the Templars**, and in 1314 the last Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake.



Hereford Mappa Mundi
The world is shown as a disc, with Jerusalem at the centre. Trade and pilgrimage routes are illustrated, together with places of interest.

Hereford, in England, was an important centre for the **wool trade** – one of the main sources of wealth in medieval England. Foreign buyers flocked to the country to buy wool for export to the **textile industries** of Flanders and Italy, and the wool trade was described as "**the jewel in the realm**". The wealth of places such as Hereford was expressed in the magnificence of their **cathedrals** and the richness of their accessories. At Hereford Cathedral a huge **Mappa Mundi** (map of the world) was created in around 1300 (its creation is variously dated to 1285 and 1314) and used as an altarpiece; it is the largest mappa mundi in existence. Such maps encapsulated the medieval world view on the eve of the **Age of Discovery**.

At the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, **Robert the Bruce**, king of Scotland (r.1306–29), finally expelled the English from Scotland.

DANTE ALIGHIERI
(1265–1321)

Dante is the greatest Italian poet to have lived and one of the most important writers in European literature. He is best known for his epic poem the *Divine Comedy*, and for his tragic love for Beatrice, who married another and died young. Exiled from his native Florence for political reasons, Dante spent much of his life travelling from one city to another. He died in Ravenna in 1321.

1301 **White Guelphs** expel **Black Guelphs** from Florence, who then return under Charles of Valois

1302 **Matins of Bruges**: Flemish revolt against French occupation

1303 French king Philip IV has **Pope Boniface VIII arrested**

1304 **Catalan Grand Company** of mercenaries halts advance of Ottoman Turks

1306 **Robert the Bruce** crowned king of Scotland

1307 Philip IV the Fair orders **arrest of the Knights Templar**

1307 Dante begins his *Divine Comedy* while in exile

1307 Hindu king of Deogir pays tribute to **Ala-ud-din of Delhi**

1309 Papacy relocates to **Avignon** (until 1378)

1311 **Catalan Grand Company** seizes Athens

1312 Final suppression of the Knights Templar at **Council of Vienne**

1312 King **Henry VII** crowned Holy Roman Emperor in the midst of a battle to assert control over Italian city-states

1313 Wang Chen devises a moveable type **printing press** in China

1313 **Dai Viet Empire** occupies Champa

1314 **Battle of Bannockburn**: English expelled from Scotland

1314 War between rival claimants to the **German imperial crown** after death of Henry VII

1314 Mamluks establish **Muslim Dongola**

1314 Hereford **Mappa Mundi** created

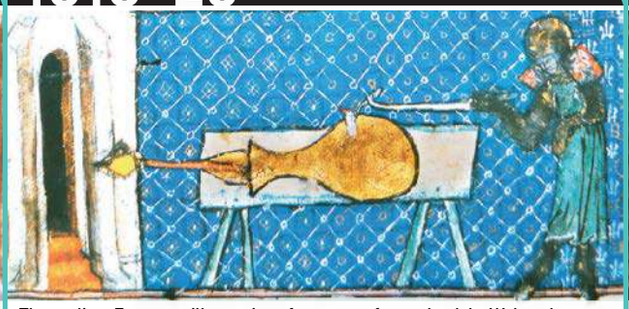
1315 **Swiss Confederation** recognized by Emperor Ludwig IV of Bavaria

1316 **Famine** in Western Europe follows crop failure the previous year

1317 **d'Este brothers** elected rulers in Ferrara

1317 **Outb-ad-Din Mubarak**, sultan of Dethi, annexes Hindu kingdom of Deogir

1318–25



The earliest European illustration of a cannon, from a book by Walter de Milemete, presented to the future Edward III of England in 1326.

GUNPOWDER WAS SLOWLY BUT STEADILY CHANGING THE FACE OF WARFARE. Arabs and Moors had probably gained knowledge of gunpowder from the **Chinese**, using cannons in Spain as early as 1284. The **Mamluks** are believed to have used **handguns** at Ain Jalut, while the Mongols acquired the technology on conquering China. Europeans probably picked it up from **Spain** and contact with the **Mongols**. The first record of cannons forged from iron comes from Metz in 1324; later that year an English fortress in Gascony was bombarded for a month.

The **Mali Empire** of West Africa reached its height under **Mansa Musa** (r.1312–37), extending from the Atlantic to Nigeria, and from the Sahara to the rainforest. His great wealth was based on **Mali's gold**, and when he travelled on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–25, he dispensed so much gold on his passage through **Cairo** that he destabilized the economy. On his return, he employed an Andalusian architect to build a new palace at **Timbuktu**, which became a centre for **Islamic scholarship**. Mali was later visited by the Moroccan scholar **Ibn Battuta** (*c.*1304–69), who first set out on his travels in 1325.

25

THE **PERCENTAGE** OF **TIMBUKTU'S POPULATION** AT **SANKORE UNIVERSITY**

The travels of Ibn Battuta
Ibn Battuta's first journey was the Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. He made seven further journeys, visiting almost every corner of the Muslim world.

1326–39

The gilded bronze doors on the Baptistry in Florence, sculpted and cast by Andrea Pisano, took six years to make after he won the commission in 1329.

FLORENCE IN THE 1320S AND 1330S WAS HOME TO ARTISTS including **Giotto di Bondone** (*c.*1267–1337) and **Andrea Pisano** (*c.*1290–1349) – both seen as forerunners of the Italian Renaissance (see pp.208–09). Giotto painted naturalistic frescoes on the walls of the **Basilica of Santa Croce** in around 1325, and in 1334 was put in charge of the construction of the **Duomo** (cathedral). Greatly influenced by Giotto, Pisano won a commission to craft a set of **bronze doors for the Baptistry of Florence**, finishing them in 1336.

The **Tughluk dynasty** of the Delhi sultanate had expanded the reach of the **Muslim** state, reducing neighbouring **Hindu kingdoms** to vassal status, and repelling a series of **Mongol incursions**. In 1325, **Muhammad Tughluk** (*c.*1300–51) murdered his father and took the throne, quickly establishing a reputation for cruelty. In 1327, he transferred the capital from Delhi to **Daulatabad** for defensive reasons, forcing the entire population to relocate. In 1336, a revolt led by **Harihara I** and his brother **Bukka** of the **Sangama dynasty** in the south, led to the establishment of the last great Hindu empire in India, centred on the city of **Vijayanagar**.

Edward II of England invested power in favourites, especially **Piers Gaveston** (murdered by resentful barons in 1312) and the **Despenser family**. He also alienated his wife, **Isabella of France**, who was sent to France in 1325 to arrange the marriage of their son. While there, she became the lover of **Roger Mortimer**, and when they returned, in 1326, they led a **revolt against the king**. The Despensers were hanged, Edward was **forced to abdicate** in favour of his teenage son, and **Roger and Isabella ruled as regents**. Eight months later, Edward II was horribly murdered. The regents ceded Gascony to France and acknowledged **Robert the Bruce** as king of an independent Scotland. In 1330, **Edward III** (r.1327–77) had Mortimer hanged and began his own rule. Rising **tension with France** was exacerbated by Edward's embargo on wool exports to **Flanders**, which **triggered a revolt** there against French domination. In 1337, Philip VI of France declared Edward's French territories forfeit, while Edward claimed the French crown, triggering the start of the **Hundred Years War**.

> **"THE FIRST KING** AFTER THE CONQUEST WHO WAS **NOT A MAN OF BUSINESS."**
>
> **William Stubbs, English historian,** describing Edward II, 1875

Vijayanagar sculpture
Lord Hanuman, the Hindu monkey god, is shown carved on a rock surface in Vijayanagar, the heart of the last great Hindu empire.

1321 Dante Alighieri dies in Ravenna (b.1265)
1323 Sultan Tughluq of Delhi annexes Telingana and repulses the Mongols
1324 William of Ockham accused of heresy at Avignon for supporting the banned "Spiritual" Franciscans
1325 Aztecs found Tenochtitlán
1326 Edward II captured by Roger Mortimer, then deposed and murdered the following year
1330 Serbs defeat and kill the Bulgarian tsar
1332 Negus of Abyssinia repulses an Islamic assault
1333 Black Death starts in China
1336 A Hindu rebellion establishes the Vijayanagar Empire in southern India
1336 Pisano's doors installed on the Florence baptistry

1324 Cannons used at the Siege of Metz
1324 Musa, emperor of Mali, annexes Timbuktu
1324–25 Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca
1325 The travels of Ibn Battuta begin
1328 Accession of Phillip VI, first Valois king of France
1328 Ludwig of Bavaria crowned Holy Roman Emperor
1330 Edward III of England begins reign
1331 Ottoman leader Ghazi Orkhan takes Nicaea
1332 Moscow becomes civil and ecclesiastical capital of Russia
1333 In Japan, Emperor Godaigo defeats the Hojo regency
1336 Civil war in Japan, the Ashikaga clan takes power
1337 Flemish rebellion triggered by English wool embargo
1337 Philip seizes Gascony from the English; start of the Hundred Years War

1340–44

The Strait of Gibraltar, where Marinid forces destroyed the Castilian fleet.

THE BATTLE OF RIO SALADO IS CONSIDERED, BY SOME, to be the defining battle of the **Reconquista**, ending forever the threat of **Islamic incursion** into the Iberian Peninsula from Africa. The **Marinid dynasty** of Morocco, which had overthrown the **Almohads** in the mid-13th century, gathered a vast force and destroyed the Castilian fleet in the **Strait of Gibraltar**. The Marinids then marched inland to the River Salado where they were defeated by the Christian kings **Alfonso XI of Castile** (r.1312–50) and **Afonso IV of Portugal** (r.1325–57).

800,000

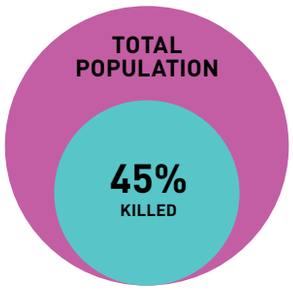
THE AMOUNT IN FLORINS **OWED** BY **EDWARD III**

To finance his expensive war in France, **Edward III** of England (r.1327–77) had taken out **huge loans** from Florentine bankers, especially the **Peruzzi family**. When the money ran out, Edward renounced his loan in 1342. With the king of Naples also defaulting on loans, the Peruzzi were bankrupted, throwing **Florence** into **economic chaos**. Walter de Brienne, the mercenary duke of Athens, was called in to take power in Florence but, eventually, a **mercantile oligarchy** took over.

1345–49

An illustration from Froissart's *Chronicle*, of 1346, depicts the Battle of Crecy, at which the English used mobile artillery for the first time.

HAVING GAINED MASTERY OF THE ENGLISH CHANNEL at the naval battle of **Sluys** in 1340, **Edward III** was free to invade France. He landed in **Normandy** in 1346 and took **Caen**, but retreated in the face of a huge French army. At bay, on the borders of the **forest of Crecy**, Edward took up a defensive position and inflicted a **crushing defeat** on the forces of Philip VI. This was largely thanks to the indiscipline and arrogance of the **French knights** and the effectiveness of the **Welsh** and **English longbowmen**. At the cost of a handful of casualties, **the English killed tens of thousands**, including the kings of Bohemia and Majorca, the duke of Lorraine, the count of Flanders, the count of Blois, eight other counts, and three archbishops. The English use of **combined aristocratic and yeoman forces** had produced a powerful new form of army. They would go on to **besiege Calais**, which fell in 1347, after a protracted siege.



Plague deaths
It is estimated that up to 45 per cent of the total population of Europe was killed by the various waves of the Black Death plague.

THE BLACK DEATH

The effects of the Black Death are best recorded in Europe, where it had profound consequences. It depopulated the land, depressed the economy, checked intellectual and artistic progress, changed the social order, contributed to the end of feudalism, and triggered a wave of anti-Semitic pogroms on Jews, who were blamed for the pestilence, forcing many to migrate to Eastern Europe.

Also in 1347, the **Black Death** arrived in Europe. It is thought to have been carried initially by Genoans returning from the **Crimea**, where they had been exposed to it by infected Mongols. Transmitted by **fleas that were carried by rats**, the plague was spread by ship to the principal ports, and then to every corner of Europe and Western Asia. A large proportion of the population died.

1350–55

> “WHATEVER THE WORLD **FINDS PLEASING,** IS BUT A **BRIEF DREAM.**”
>
> **Petrarch, Florentine scholar and poet,** from *Canzoniere number 1* (*c.*1352)

THE PAPACY WAS REFORMING ITS BUREAUCRACY and improving its finances under the Avignon popes. In 1348, **Clement VI** (1291–1352) bought **Avignon** from Joanne of Naples and work continued on its papal palace. **Scholars and artists** were attracted to the papal city, briefly among them the Florentine **Francesco Petrarch** (1304–74), who had been crowned **poet laureate** in Rome in 1341. In 1351, Petrarch started to arrange his poems in **sonnet** form. He was also a scholar, whose translation and popularization of **Classical literature** contributed to the emergence of **humanism**, a new school of philosophy that would help to trigger the **Renaissance**.

In 1354, the Nasrid king of Granada, **Yusuf I**, was murdered by his son **Mohammed V** (1338–91) who took the throne. Under Mohammed, the **Alhambra** – the fortress-palace of Granada – was further developed, becoming a **treasure of Islamic architecture**.

The **Ottomans** were invited to **Gallipoli**, on the Dardanelles (the straits separating Asia from Europe), by John Cantacuzenus (*c.*1292–1383), claimant to the **Byzantine throne**, to help in his attempt to gain power. Led by Orhan, the **Turkish dynasty** soon seized the peninsula, securing themselves a foothold in Europe.

Architectural jewel
The Court of the Lions is at the heart of the Alhambra palace, built by Mohammed V as the winter residence of the royal family.

1340 Battle of Rio Salado
1340 Blast furnaces for iron smelting used in Belgium
1342 Edward III renounces debts to Peruzzi bankers
1344 Aegean Crusade takes Smyrna from the Turks
1344 Mongols defeated by Poles and Hungarians
1346 Stephan Dushan IV crowned emperor of the Serbs
1346 Battle of Crecy
1347 Truce between English and French
1347 English take Calais
1347 Black Death strikes Genoa, Constantinople, Marseille, Cyprus, and Naples, and ravages Western Asia
1346 Rebellion against the Sultanate of Dethi leads to foundation of Kashmiri kingdom
1348 Teutonic Knights defeat Lithuanian princes at Kovno
1348 Black Death hits Tuscany, France, Spain, and England
1351 War starts between Florence and Milan
1351 Second Siamese kingdom formed
1351 Acamapichtli becomes king of the Aztecs
1351 Petrarch starts to develop his sonnets
1351 Boccaccio completes his *Decameron*
1351 Zurich joins the Swiss Confederation, followed by Bern and other cities
1353 Champa battles to regain territory from Dai Viet
1354 Ottomans seize Gallipoli
1354 Cola Di Rienzo, tribune and dictator of Rome, deposed and killed

1356–65

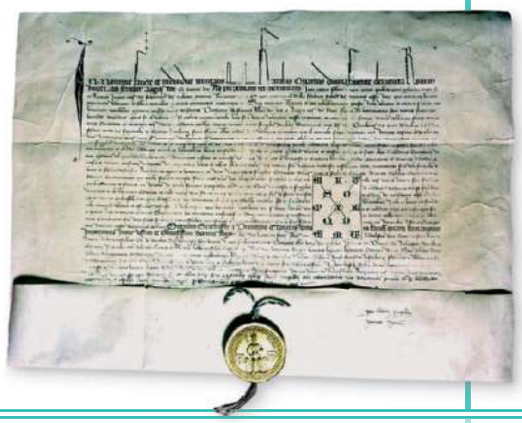
To many people, Petrarch is known as the "father of humanism".

This mural features Timur Leng, who rose from humble beginnings to found the Timurid dynasty after outmatching the conquests of Genghis Khan.

BOHEMIA HAD EMERGED AS A POWERFUL STATE under the Premyslid dynasty in the 13th century. Under the **Luxembourg dynasty**, it became the central force in German imperial geopolitics, while its ruler **Charles I** (Charles IV as Holy Roman Emperor) sought to **modernize** the imperial institution and advance the fortunes of Bohemia. In 1348, he had enlarged the kingdom by **granting it territories** such as Moravia and Silesia, and refounded **Prague** to become one of the foremost cities in Europe, with a major university. In 1356, Charles IV issued the **Golden Bull**, which regularized the election of the emperor to a majority vote of seven electoral princes, most of which were hereditary; the papacy would have no role. This, in turn, allowed the electoral principalities to develop **sovereign states**, and set the constitutional basis of the Holy Roman Empire until its final dissolution in 1806. The Bull established Bohemia as first among the electors and guaranteed its independence.

Timur Leng (1336–1405) – also known as Tamerlane – rose from modest beginnings to become leader of a **Turkic-Mongol Chagatai tribe** in Transoxiana, Central Asia, in around 1362. Despite having a limp, and the fact that he was not of **Chinggid descent** (directly descended from Genghis Khan – only Chinggids could become khans), he was destined to become one of the **greatest conquerors** in history.

Edward of Woodstock, eldest son of Edward III, also known as the **Black Prince** (1330–76), had won his spurs at the **Battle of Crécy** aged just 16. He went on to become one of the most effective English commanders. When **hostilities renewed** between England and France in 1355, he invaded France, winning a great victory near **Poitiers** in 1356, in which he captured **King John of France**.



Golden Bull
Edicts issued with golden seals were called Golden Bulls. That of Emperor Charles IV sought to prevent future imperial elections descending into conflict.

1366–72

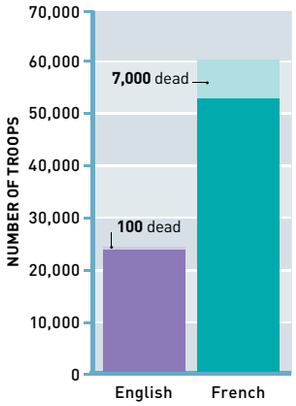
Constructed of brick and timber, the Bell Tower of Xi'an, was built during the early Ming dynasty, in the reign of Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming emperor.

EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE, HAD BEEN MADE PRINCE OF GASCONY AND AQUITAINE in 1362, moving to Bordeaux and becoming a major player in continental affairs. In 1367, he intervened in a **dynastic dispute in Castile**, where French ally Henry of Trastamara (1334–79) had deposed English ally Pedro I, thereby **placing control of the Castilian navy in the French camp**. Edward defeated Henry at **Nájera** but was forced to withdraw owing to illness. Subsequently, Henry regained the Castilian throne. In 1372 – after **Charles V of France** (r.1364–80) had fomented a **Gascon rebellion**, restarting the **Hundred Years War** – the Castilian navy proved instrumental in defeating an English fleet at **La Rochelle**.

China was reunited by conquest from the south, as a native rebellion drove out the **Mongol Yuan dynasty**. In 1368, rebels under **Zhu Yuanzhang** (1328–98) – a former peasant turned Buddhist monk then general – struck north from their base in Nanjing, **displacing the Yuan from Beijing**. Taking the imperial name **Hongwu**, Yuanzhang established the **Ming dynasty**, setting up a strong, centralized, government, in which the position of emperor was strengthened, but so was access to the bureaucracy. In 1372, he passed an edict attempting to ban maritime trade and thus **limit contact with foreigners**.

276
THE SPAN, IN YEARS, OF THE **MING DYNASTY**

Under **Murad I** (r.1362–89), the Ottoman Turks extended their control deep into the **Balkans**. In 1371, Murad defeated an alliance of Serbs, Byzantines, and Bulgars, and held control over much of Thrace, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Serbia. He also created the **Janissaries**, a slave-warrior corps that became the mainstay of Ottoman armies.



Battle of Nájera
Outnumbered by almost three to one, the English–Gascon army defeated the French–Castilian forces with the loss of only around 100 men.

1354 Venetian fleet defeats Genoans at **Porto Longo**
1354 Mohammed V becomes king of Granada and develops the **Alhambra palace**
1355 Stephen Dushan, king of Serbia, dies; his empire starts to disintegrate
1355 Nationalist revolt against Mongol rule gathers pace in **China**
1356 Battle of Poitiers; the Black Prince captures King John of France
1356 Golden Bull of Emperor Charles IV
1356 Anti-Mongol Chinese rebels seize **Nanjing**
1359 Civil war in the **Golden Horde**, Eastern Europe
1360 Edward III campaigns in France, and agrees terms at the **Treaty of Calais**
c.1362 Timur Leng emerges as tribal leader in Transoxiana, Central Asia
1363 Algirdas of Lithuania defeats the Mongols and extends his territories to Black Sea
1364 Casimir the Great of Poland founds a school at Cracow
1367 Battle of Nájera
1368 Zhu Yuanzhang expels Yuan dynasty and founds **Ming dynasty**
1368 Tibet regains **independence** following Yuan collapse
1369 Timur Leng conquers Samarkand
1369 Hundred Years War restarts
1369 Hanseatic League at peak of its power
1371 Battle of Chermomen
1372 French are victorious in naval battle of **La Rochelle**, and recover Poitiers

THE STORY OF PRINTING

A REVOLUTION IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION CHANGES THE WORLD FOREVER

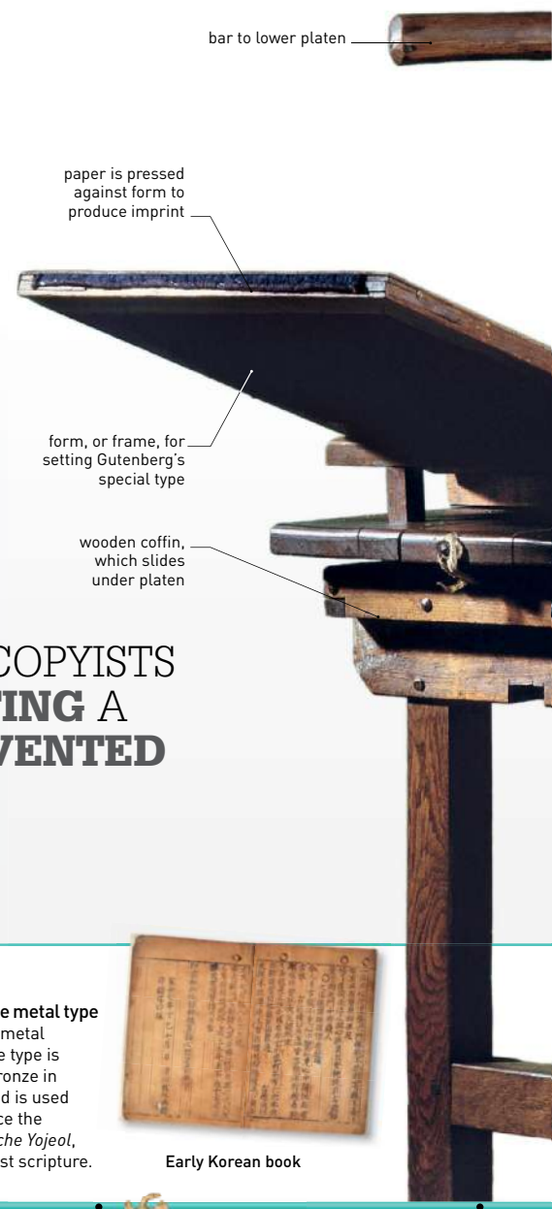
By making it possible to communicate and disseminate information at a speed and scale previously unthinkable, printing wrought changes that are still unfolding today, from triggering religious mania, to scientific and political revolutions – even changing language itself.

Printing is the impression of marks on a medium – most commonly ink on paper. The earliest writing, cuneiform, was a form of printing composed of indentations made by a stylus in clay. Printing, in the modern sense of the word, first arose in 8th-century China with the development of block printing. Blocks of wood carved into bas-relief were used as stamps to reproduce multiple copies of a single text, complete with images, such as the *Diamond Sutra*, the earliest dateable printed book (see 861–70).

MECHANICAL PRINTING

Block printing was laborious and slow, as each block was specific to one page. Moveable type was a major advance (see panel, opposite), first achieved in eastern Asia but perfected by German printer Johannes Gutenberg (see 1454–55). His printing press was so advanced that, except for refinements such as new typefaces and mechanization of the presses and paper handling, the basic process remained unchanged until the 19th century.

In the 1880s, the development of linotype allowed a typesetter to compose lines of type using a keyboard, rather than by hand. Stereotyping made it possible to duplicate complete pages for multiple printing. In the 20th century, filmsetting enabled rapid photographic creation of printing plates. By the end of the century, computers allowed every aspect of printing, from typesetting and graphics to inking and drying, to be done on one machine.



> “HE WHO FIRST **SHORTENED** THE **LABOUR** OF COPYISTS **BY** DEVICE OF **MOVEABLE TYPES** WAS … **CREATING** A WHOLE NEW **DEMOCRATIC WORLD;** HE HAD **INVENTED** THE **ART OF PRINTING.**”

Thomas Carlyle, Scottish essayist and historian, 1759–1881

***c.*2291–2254 BCE**
Sumerian cuneiform
Stamping cuneiform inscriptions, rather than drawing them by hand, is introduced. Stamps are pressed into soft clay bricks, which are then fired.

Sumerian cuneiform

868
Block printed book
The earliest dated book (entire manuscript) is the *Diamond Sutra*, a Buddhist text found in a cave in Dunhuang, China.

The *Diamond Sutra*

1377
Moveable metal type
The first metal moveable type is cast in bronze in Korea and is used to produce the *Jikji Simche Yojeol*, a Buddhist scripture.

Early Korean book

8th century
Block printing
Printing using carved wooden blocks and ink is known as xylography; the earliest surviving xylographic fragment is a Buddhist *dharani* scroll from Korea.

Japanese *dharani* scroll

***c.*1275–1313**
Moveable type
Invented in China in the 11th century, moveable type is refined by Wang Shen, who uses over 60,000 wooden types in his treatise.

Gutenberg's printing press

***c.*1455–56**
The printing press
Gutenberg prints the first book in Europe – the Gutenberg or 42-line *Bible* (because of the number of lines on each page).

Columbian metal press

1790s–1820s
Metal presses
The all-metal Columbian printing press is the first to replace the screw with levers and weights.

screw, or spindle, adapted from wine press

square sleeve, or socket

heavy platen, or printing plate

leather ink balls stuffed with horsehair

sturdy construction for industrial-scale production

Gutenberg's press
Gutenberg created a screw press for pressing inked type, set on a wooden frame, against a sheet of paper. This was a dramatic improvement on the traditional method of taking impressions by means of rubbing.

MOVEABLE TYPE

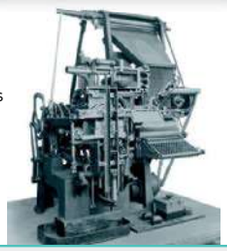
The key technology in the printing revolution was moveable type, in which each character in a script had a corresponding single, small block, or type, allowing lines of type to be assembled, and then reordered for different texts. The first book, printed by moveable type cast in bronze, was published in Korea in the late 14th century. Gutenberg improved upon this technology by developing a technique that enabled rapid, precision casting of metal type.

Letterpress printing with moveable type

Laser printer

Late 20th century–present
Desktop printing
The laser printer offers technology that would once have filled an entire workshop.

1886
Linotype
A linotype machine allows a typesetter to make up entire lines of type, using a typewriter-like keyboard, rather than hand-compositing letter-by-letter.



Linotype typesetter

1903
Offset printing
In offset printing, the inked image is transferred (or offset) from the printing plate to the paper via a rubber sheet, achieving smooth, precise transfer and reducing wear on the plate.

Early photocopier

1949
Photocopying
Developed by American Chester Carlson at the Xerox Corporation in the US, the photocopier uses electrostatic distribution of powder ink or toner, rather than wet ink, to create an exact copy.

1373–80

A 16th-century painting captures the triumphant return of the Doge to Venice after victory over the Genoese.

THE WAR OF CHIOGGIA, BETWEEN VENICE AND GENOA, was triggered by the continuing contest for control of the **trade routes through the Dardanelles**, along which flowed the lucrative trade of the **Byzantine Empire** and the **Silk Road** beyond it. In 1376, the Byzantine emperor **John V Palaeologus** (r.1341–76) granted to Venice the Aegean island of **Tenedos**, key to the Dardanelles. Meanwhile, his son and rival **Andronicus IV** (1348–85) granted it to Genoa. In the ensuing war, the Genoans defeated the Venetians at **Pola** and, in 1379, seized **Chioggia** in Italy and **blockaded Venice**. Under Vittorio Pisano, the Venetians counter-blockaded the Genoese fleet, starving it into submission. **Genoese maritime power was broken** and Venice now controlled the Levantine trade.

> **“NOTHING GREAT** IS EVER ACHIEVED WITHOUT **MUCH ENDURING.”**
>
> **St Catherine of Siena,** (1347–80)

In 1376, Dominican mystic and miracle worker **Catherine of Siena** travelled to Avignon to convince **Gregory XI** (c.1336–78) to return the papacy to Rome. A few months later, Gregory went to Rome to attempt to restore order in the Papal States, and died soon after. The **Roman mob** pressured the conclave of cardinals to choose an **Italian pope**, and **Urban VI** (c.1318–89) was duly elected. French cardinals, meanwhile, elected **Robert of Geneva** (1342–94) as **anti-pope Clement VII**. The French king, Charles V, threw his weight behind Clement, while **Richard II of England** allied with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in supporting the Roman candidate. Thus began the **Western, or Great Schism**, which saw rival popes installed in Rome and Avignon until 1417.

Executioner of Cesena
The anti-pope Clement VII was known as the “executioner of Cesena” for his brutal suppression of a rebellion in the Papal States while acting as a papal legate.

1381–85

An illustration from Froissart’s Chronicle depicts the Peasants’ Revolt, the first great popular rebellion in English history, led by Wat Tyler, who was executed by the mayor of London.

THE BLACK DEATH AND SUBSEQUENT LABOUR SHORTAGES contributed to rising social tension in England. Around 1362, for instance, the poor country priest William Langland had written *Piers Plowman*, a poem in English sympathizing with the plight of the poor peasant. Churchman and scholar **John Wycliffe** (or Wiclif) had caused a stir with writings that prefigured **Protestantism**, and a popular Biblical egalitarian sect, known as the **Lollards**, partially inspired by Wycliffe, was winning widespread support. In 1377, the so-called **Bad Parliament**, dominated by the king’s son **John of Gaunt**, earl of Lancaster and soon-to-be regent to his infant nephew **Richard II** (1367–1400), introduced a **poll tax**; subsequent parliaments extended it, causing **widespread grievance**. In 1381, attempts to reintroduce serfdom triggered the **Peasants’ Revolt**, which saw peasants rising against landlords, burning manors, and destroying records. Up to 100,000 men, under **Jack Straw** and **Wat Tyler**, marched on London and siezed the Tower, burning the palace of John of Gaunt and **killing Archbishop Sudbury**, who was blamed for the poll taxes. Richard II cleverly appeased the rebels; Tyler was executed and **the revolt was brutally suppressed**.

Japanese **Noh drama** developed in the 14th century, mainly under the aegis of Kanami Kiyotsugo (1333–84) and his son Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443), who wrote hundreds of Noh plays and developed the highly stylized and symbolic performances.

Castilian influence in Portugal in the 1380s threatened the independence of the kingdom and sparked **resentment among the Portuguese**. An uprising triggered by a nun resulted in **João** (1358–1453), illegitimate son of Pedro I, seizing control of the country. In 1384, **John I of Castile** (1358–90) invaded Portugal, but João was elected king by the Portuguese parliament and, with English help, defeated Castile at the **Battle of Aljubarrota**, in 1385. In doing so, he freed Portugal from Castilian influence and, after marrying the daughter of John of Gaunt, founded the **Anglo-Portuguese Avis dynasty**.

In 1384, **Philip the Bold of Burgundy** inherited the county of Flanders, adding to his extensive territories. France, ruled by the young and mentally ill **Charles VI**, was now dominated by rivalry between the houses of **Burgundy** and **Orléans**.

Noh mask
In Noh drama, which involves music, singing, speech, and mime, masks are used by the principal character, and by female and elderly characters.

1373 John Hawkwood’s **White Company** mercenaries defeat the Milanese

1375 Mamluks invade Armenia

1377 Edward III dies (b.1312); **Richard II** is crowned king of England

1377 Papacy returns to Rome

1378 Schism of rival popes at Rome and Avignon

1378 Ayutthaya (present-day Thailand) subjugates Sukothai

1378 War of Chioggia begins (to 1381); Venice ends Genoan supremacy

1380 Russians under **Dmitri III of Moscow** defeat the Golden Horde at Kulikovo

1380 Timur Leng begins to overrun Persia

1381 The **Peasants’ Revolt** in England

1382 Golden Horde sacks Moscow and reasserts control over Russia

1382 Ming take complete control of China and **expel** the **Mongols**

1382 Timur Leng conquers Khorasan

1384 John Wycliffe dies; rise of **Lollards**

1384 Kanami Kiyotsugo, dramatist who shaped development of Noh theatre in Japan, dies

1384 Philip the Bold of Burgundy becomes count of Flanders

1385 Battle of Aljubarrota establishes Portuguese independence

1385 Ottomans take Sofia

1386–90

Travelling pilgrims are shown in an illustration from the *Canterbury Tales*. This unfinished poem by Geoffrey Chaucer, 17,000 lines long, vividly illustrates the medieval world view on social, religious, and moral matters.

JAGIELLO OF LITHUANIA (C.1362–1434), THE LAST PAGAN RULER in Europe, was crowned king of Poland and converted to Christianity in 1386. Marriage to **Jadwiga of Poland** united the two kingdoms, and brought Lithuania into the Catholic Church, although pagan traditions lingered on.

Timur Leng (see 1356–65) completed his **conquest of Persia** in 1386 and raided deep into the Caucasus, sacking **Tbilisi** in Georgia and capturing the Georgian king. However, when the army of the **Golden Horde** attacked his Central Asian territories, in 1387, he was forced to turn back and meet them. It took another nine years for him to destroy the threat.

Geoffrey Chaucer (*c.*1340–1400) was a soldier, scholar, writer, diplomat, government official, and Member of Parliament. He was instrumental in the development of **Middle English** – a combination of Old English and French influences. His greatest work, the ***Canterbury Tales***, partially modelled on Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, tells the story of pilgrims on the road to the shrine of **Thomas Becket** (see 1170); it was begun in 1387.

At the **Battle of Kosovo**, in 1389, the Ottomans defeated the Serbs and Bosnians, **smashing the Serbian empire** and absorbing most of its territories. The Ottoman leader, Murad, was killed in the battle but his son **Bayezid the Thunderbolt** (1360–1403) took over. News of Murad's death prompted the **Ottoman vassals** in Europe and Anatolia to **revolt**, but Bayezid swiftly reduced most of them, bringing their territories under **direct Ottoman rule**. The Ottomans now controlled most of Anatolia and the Balkans south of the Danube. Bayezid introduced the **devshirme** – the levy of Christian children who were converted to Islam and used in the administration and **Janissary** corps.

CHRISTIANIZATION OF EUROPE

In Europe, the medieval period saw the vigorous advance of Christianity until it encompassed the entire region (with just a few exceptions). The spectacular success in converting Europe posed extreme challenges to the Church, as it struggled to reconcile temporal and spiritual power. Internal forces would continue to revolutionize the religion.

The Timurid Empire
Established by Timur Leng, the Timurid Empire eventually reached a greater extent even than that of Genghis Khan, but it would not long survive Timur's death.

KEY
→ Campaigns of Timur
Extent of Timur's empire

1391–1400

A miniature from the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, shows the Battle of Nicopolis, at which the Ottomans destroyed a crusading army.

THE START OF THE MING DYNASTY IN CHINA TRIGGERED CHANGE IN KOREA, which was considered a client state by the Ming. The **Koryo empire** had supported the new Chinese dynasty, but this did not prevent the Ming from threatening to invade. In 1388, **Yi Songgye** (1335–1408), a leading general who favoured the Chinese, seized power in Korea. In 1392, as **King Taejo**, he founded the **Yi dynasty**, also known as the Choson (or Joseon), a name taken from an ancient Korean kingdom. Taejo restructured his government on the Chinese model, and instituted **wide-ranging land reforms** to redistribute estates from the hands of the oligarchy, replacing them with a new class of technocrats known as the yangban. **Neo-Confucianism** was adopted as the state religion, and a new capital was founded at **Hanseong** (Seoul). The Yi dynasty lasted until 1910.

In **Japan**, the union of the northern and southern imperial courts in 1392 brought to an end the **Yoshino period** (also known as the Period of Northern and Southern Courts). During this period, the line of the emperor **Godaigo** – driven out of the capital, Kyoto, by the Ashikaga shogun Takauji, in 1336 – had maintained a **rival court** in the mountainous Yoshino region south of Nara. Japan was wracked by **civil war** until the shogun **Ashikaga Yoshimitsu** (1358–1408) negotiated a reunification and brought Ashikaga power to its apogee.

The **Nicopolis Crusade** of 1396 – intended to roll back the Ottoman advance in the Balkans – saw a Franco-Hungarian expedition led by **Sigismund of Hungary** humiliatingly crushed at the Bulgarian town of Nicopolis on the Danube. A huge army, featuring volunteers from most of the **Christian states**, proved ill-disciplined. The failure of this adventure proved that Christian Europe had to look to its defence.

Gyeongbokgung Palace
This colossal palace, built by King Taejo (Yi Songgye) in 1395, is also known as the "Palace of Shining Happiness" and the "Palace Greatly Blessed by Heaven".

1386 Jagiello of Lithuania, the last pagan ruler in Europe, crowned king of Poland and converts to Christianity

1386 Timur Leng completes the conquest of Persia and sacks Georgia

1387 English writer Geoffrey **Chaucer** begins to write the *Canterbury Tales*

1387 War between Timur Leng and the **Golden Horde**

1388 Milan, under **Gian Galeazzo Visconti**, adds Padua to other conquests in northern Italy

1388 John Wycliffe's English translation of the **Bible** published; a later version is known as the Lollard's Bible

1389 Wenceslas IV, king of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, puts in to effect a **general peace** in Germany

1389 Battle of Kosovo; Serbian empire absorbed by Ottomans

1392 League of Bologna: Florence, Bologna, Padua, and Ferrara join together to oppose Milan

1392 End of the **Yoshino period** in Japan; Northern and Southern Courts are reunited

1392 Yi (Choson) **dynasty** begins in Korea

1393 Timur Leng completes the conquest of **IlKhanate**

1395 Timur Leng routs the Golden Horde and despoils their khanate

1396 Battle of Nicopolis; Ottomans repel the Crusader campaign

1398 Timur Leng invades India, and takes **Delhi**

1399 Henry IV deposes Richard II in England

1399 Welsh ruler **Owain Glendower** leads a Welsh rebellion

1401–03

The wall of skulls at the Templo Mayor archaeological site in Mexico City is made from skulls carved in stone, covered with stucco; the Aztecs practised human sacrifice at the vast temples in the centre of Tenochtitlan.

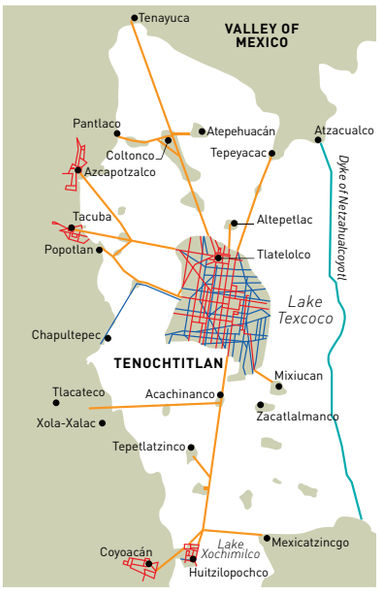
FOUNDED BY THE AZTECS IN 1325, the city of **Tenochtitlan** – existing on the apparently unpromising site of a marshy island in a partially brackish lake – reached its height at the beginning of the 15th century. Tenochtitlan means "Place of the Fruit of the Cactus" – a reference to the vision that supposedly informed the choice of location. In this vision, the tossed heart of a conquered enemy landed on the island where an eagle wrestled with a snake on a cactus growing out of a rock – as depicted on the present-day Mexican flag. The **Aztecs** drained the island, reclaiming surrounding land, and joined the land together with causeways.

Meanwhile, they expanded their political territory through marriages, alliances, and conquest. After a flood, Tenochtitlan was laid out on a grid pattern, with quarters arranged around a **central sacred district**, regarded as the centre of the world. A huge population of up to 200,000 was supported by **intensive agriculture** and extensive **networks of trade** and tribute.

The African **Songhay kingdom** was centred on the trading metropolis of Gao, in the Niger Bend area of **West Africa**. Gao had long been a prosperous city thanks to interregional and trans-Saharan trade with the Islamic world, especially in salt, gold, slaves, and ivory. In the mid-13th century, because of the allure of its riches, it became an eastern province of the **Mali Empire** (see 1231–35). However, in the early 15th century, Mali declined and Gao won its independence, beginning the growth of a Songhay Empire that would eclipse the other two largest empires of the late Iron Age in West Africa – Ghana and Mali.

In 1398, **Timur Leng** (see 1356–65) had invaded northern India and destroyed the **Delhi sultanate** with astonishing speed and terrifying cruelty. Marching 260km (160 miles) in two days, he captured and massacred 100,000 fugitives outside Delhi before sacking the city, supposedly building a huge pyramid from the skulls of his victims. In 1401, Timur massacred the population of Baghdad and launched an invasion of Syria. He then moved against the **Ottomans** (see 1286–90), occupying Anatolia and restoring the old Turkoman principalities.

Songhay gold coin
This coin from the Songhay Empire is from the Songhay city of Gao; rich and powerful, the city provided the basis for building the empire.



Map of Tenochtitlan
Causeways connected Tenochtitlan to other settlements on the lake and the mainland. The city and its emperor dominated the Valley of Mexico.

1404–07

> "WE HAVE **SET EYES** ON... REGIONS... **FAR AWAY**..."
>
> **Zheng He, Chinese explorer**

HAVING CONQUERED AS FAR AS RUSSIA in the East, **Timur Leng** (see 1386–90) set his sights on the greatest empire – **China**. In 1405, he embarked on a campaign, but died en route to China and was buried at his capital, Samarkand. Despite his possibly exaggerated reputation for cruelty, Timur was a devout Muslim and a **patron of the arts** and architecture. His enormous empire did not long survive him, quickly breaking down into a Timurid state ruled by his son Shah Rukh (1377–1447), which soon fragmented further.

In 1404, John the Fearless (1371–1419) became **duke of Burgundy**, leading opposition to the regency of Louis, duke of Orleans (1372–1407), brother of the mad king, Charles VI of France (1368–1422). In 1407, John ordered the assassination of Louis, triggering **civil war** between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs (named for the count of Armagnac, the father-in-law of Charles, the new duke of Orleans). The **Burgundians**, who favoured peace with the English, were popular in Paris and the north, while the **Armagnacs**, who were anti-English and pro-war, had the support of Queen Isabeau of Bavaria, the great nobles, and the south of the country.

In 1404, **Zheng He**, (1371–1435) – a Muslim captured from Yunnan in China as a boy, castrated, and pressed into military service – was named grand, or high-ranking, eunuch at the imperial court. The following year he led the first of seven epic voyages of discovery.

1408–10

Wladyslaw II Jagiello of Poland prepares for the Battle of Tannenberg.

THE RELENTLESS ADVANCE OF THE ORDER OF TEUTONIC KNIGHTS (see 1236–40) had brought Prussia and much of the Baltic coast under their control, cutting Poland off from the sea. The union of Poland and Lithuania under King Wladyslaw II Jagiello (*c.*1362–1434) posed a new threat to the Order, and the **Great Northern War** ensued. At the **Battle of Tannenberg** in 1410 – one of the greatest cavalry confrontations of the age – a huge Polish–Lithuanian army of up to 16,500, including Bohemian mercenaries, Russians, and even Tatars (Turkic Mongols), defeated

c.1400s Height of Aztec city of **Tenochtitlan**

c.1400s Expansion of West African **Songhay Empire**

1401 Timur (1336–1405) massacres population of Baghdad

1402 Italian architect **Lorenzo Ghiberti** commissioned to design doors of **Florence Baptistry**

1402 Battle of Ankara; **Timur captures Ottoman sultan**

1403 Malay ruler Parmesvara establishes **Sultanate of Malacca**

1405 Break up of Visconti domains; **Venice seizes** Padua, Verona, and Vincenza

1405 First voyage of explorer **Zheng He**

1405 Death of Timur (b.1336); **fragmentation of Timurid Empire**

1407 Civil war in **France** pits Armagnacs against Burgundians

1409 **Donatello** di Niccolo di Betto Bardi completes his masterpiece, *David*

1409 **Council of Pisa** results in three papal claimants

1411–15

This later depiction of the Battle of Agincourt shows cavalry engaged in conflict; around 10,000 French troops were killed or captured.

the forces of the Teutonic Knights who were around 11,000 strong. The Order was crushed, but Jagiello was unable to keep the powerful Polish nobles in order and thus could not press home his advantage. The **Peace of Thorn**, concluded the following year, failed to secure Polish access to the Baltic and enabled the Teutonic Knights to regain some of their advantage.

Andrei Rublev (*c.*1370–1430) was a Russian monk and painter, based at the St Sergius monastery of the Holy Trinity in Moscow. He worked during a period of monastic revival in Russia, when the Eastern Orthodox Church offered comfort in the face of internecine war and the hated **Mongol Yoke** – the tribute and service exacted by the Golden Horde. Though inspired by the great icon painter Theophanes the Greek, Rublev was celebrated for pioneering a new, more serene and symmetrical style.

The Holy Trinity
This detail from Andrei Rublev's greatest icon, painted around 1410, shows the three angels who visited Abraham. Each angel represents a different aspect of the Trinity.

IN 1413, HENRY IV OF ENGLAND DIED and his son, Henry V (1386–1422), came to the throne. In 1415, Henry concluded an alliance with Burgundy and reasserted the **English claim to the French crown** as a pretext for renewing the **Hundred Years War** (see panel, right). In October, Henry inflicted a terrible defeat on a far superior French force at **Agincourt**, taking the Duke of Orleans prisoner, and going on to conquer Normandy.

> "...THE LIVING **FELL ON** TOP OF THE **DEAD,** AND OTHERS **FALLING ON** TOP OF **THE LIVING** WERE KILLED AS WELL."
>
> From ***Gesta Henrici Quinti***, *c.*1416

During **Chinese explorer Zheng He's** fourth and greatest expedition in 1413, he visited Calicut in India, and reached Hormuz on the Persian Gulf, sending ships to explore down the African coast as far as Malindi in Kenya. The fleet included 63 ships of up to 80m (260ft) long.

In 1414, anti-pope **John XXIII** – one of three men claiming to be pope – was expelled from Rome by King Ladislas of Naples. John sought refuge with the emperor, **Sigismund**, who forced him to convene a general council – the **Council of Constance** – to resolve the split in the Catholic Church known as the **Great Schism** (see 1373–80). In 1415, the Council deposed the existing claimants, and condemned the Bohemian priest, religious reformer, and philosopher **Jan Huss**, who was executed the same year.

THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

The series of conflicts from 1337 to 1453, later known as the Hundred Years War, was triggered by a combination of factors: tensions over the status of the duchy of Guienne, which belonged to the kings of England but owed sovereignty to the French crown; English claims to that crown, based on descent from the Capetians; anxieties of influence on both sides; and the need of English kings to use foreign adventures to shore up support at home. There should have been little contest between France, the most powerful nation in Europe, and smaller, poorer England, but the English used new tactics and weapons, especially the longbow, to devastating effect. The war drained resources on both sides, but also forged a new degree of national identity for both countries.

1416–20

This illustration from the Chronicle of Ulrich von Richental shows the papal electors taking their leave from Emperor Sigismund at the Council of Constance.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE ENDED THE GREAT SCHISM in 1417 by trying and deposing the last anti-pope, Benedict XIII, and electing Martin V (*c.*1348–1431) as the sole true pope.

The burning at the stake of Bohemian religious reformer **Jan Huss** (see 1411–15), and the death of Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia (1361–1419), sparked a **Hussite uprising** in Bohemia. This combined a religious tussle between the papacy and anti-papists, with a nationalist struggle between Czechs (Bohemians and Moravians) and Germans. The Hussites made up of moderate (Utraquist) and extreme (Taborite) factions, united to face a crusading alliance led by Wenceslaus' brother, the emperor Sigismund. The Hussites defeated the alliance outside Prague.

In 1411, **peace** was concluded between **Portugal and Castile** (see 1381–85). Portugal now began to look outwards, winning a foothold on the north coast of Africa at Ceuta in 1415. Explorer **Henry the Navigator** (1394–1460) distinguished himself in the expedition; his visit to Africa sparked an interest in exploration, and he may have set up the first school of navigation in Europe at Sagres, in Portugal (see 1434).

45

THE **NUMBER** OF **SESSIONS** HELD AT THE 42-MONTH-LONG **COUNCIL** OF **CONSTANCE**

1410 Polish-Lithuanian forces defeat Teutonic Knights at **Battle of Tannenburg**

1410 Death of **Kanajeji, king of Kano**, present-day Nigeria

1410 Anti-pope John XIII makes **Medici Bank in Florence** the papal bank

1411 Peace of Thorn ends conflict between Teutonic Knights and Polish-Lithuanian forces

1413 Henry IV of England dies (b.1366)

1413 Accession of **Henry V** of England

1413 Fourth and greatest expedition of **Zheng He**

1413 Battle of Jamurlu in Serbia

1414 Khizr Khan (r.1414–21) establishes **Sayyid dynasty** in Delhi

1415 Battle of Agincourt fought between French and English

1415 Portugal conquers **Ceuta** in Africa

1416 Nobleman **Amadeus VII** named duke of Savoy; **annexes Piedmont**, Italy

1417 Council of Constance ends **Great Schism**

1417 Ming emperor Yongle (1360–1424) fixes **Confucian canon**, reinstitutes civil service exam system

1419 Henry the Navigator (1394–1460) possibly sets up school of navigation in Portugal

1420 Hussite Wars; Hussites under Jan Zizka defeat anti-Hussite crusade

1421–22

Fillipo Maria Visconti of Milan sits in state; having assassinated his brother to become duke of Milan, he restored Visconti hegemony over northern Italy.

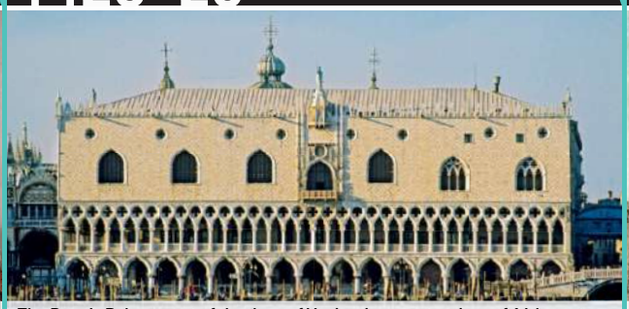
SULTAN MEHMED I (1382–1421) had successfully **restored the Ottoman state** after the Timurid invasion (see 1401–03), although his navy had come off worse in a conflict with the **Venetians** at the **Battle of Galipoli** in 1416, forcing the Ottomans to recognize Venetian claims in Albania. In 1421, Mehmed died and his son, **Murad II** (1404–51) became sultan. Domestically, he restored the *devshirme* practice of training Christian slaves for key roles in government; externally, he pursued a policy of renewed expansion, beginning with the first **Ottoman siege of Constantinople**. The siege was unsuccessful and Mehmed was distracted by an uprising led by the Sufi theologian and preacher, Sheikh Bedreddin – it was suppressed, and the sheikh was executed.

The **Visconti family** had ruled **Milan** since Archbishop Otto Visconti rose to power in 1277; their domain had spread to encompass much of northern Italy, reaching its height under **Gian Galeazzo** (1351–1402), sole ruler from 1385. He had made marriage alliances with the chief monarchs of Europe; was made hereditary duke in 1395; mastered Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Pisa, Siena, Assisi, and Perugia between 1386 and 1400; and threatened Florence until his death in 1402. Strife between his sons Gian Maria and Filippo Maria saw this empire disintegrate, but when Filippo had Gian assassinated in 1412, he set about restoring it, **regaining Genoa** in 1421. The Visconti patronized the arts and scholarship, helping to drive the **Renaissance**.

Sultan Murad II
Murad defended and extended the Ottoman Empire, and was also a patron of poetry and learning, making his court a cultural centre.

The French had suffered great losses at **Agincourt** (see 1411–15), and in 1420, at the prompting of the pro-English **Burgundians**, Charles VI of France had accepted the **Treaty of Troyes** and acknowledged Henry V of England as his heir and immediate regent. The agreement ceded all the conquered lands up to the Loire to the English and declared the dauphin, Charles, to be illegitimate. The **English** now **controlled northern France**. In 1422, both Henry and Charles died, and under the terms of the Treaty, the infant Henry VI was acclaimed king of both England and France. The dauphin, based at Bourges, refused to accept this, and the **Hundred Years War** (see 1411–15) continued.

1423–25



The Doge's Palace, seat of the doge of Venice, is a masterpiece of 14th-century Gothic architecture, overlain with 15th, 16th, and 17th century additions.

IN THE 1420S, THE CULTURAL MOVEMENT known later as the Italian or **High Renaissance** gathered pace, particularly in the field of **painting and the visual arts**. In 1424, the sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455) completed the gilded bronze doors for the **Florence Baptistry** that he had been commissioned to make in 1403; the following year he was commissioned for a further set. Working at the same time as Ghiberti were a host of other artists, including Brunelleschi, Jacopo della Quercia, Masaccio, Donatello, Gentile da Fabriano, Jan van Eyck, and many more.

Although **Florence** was the heart of the Renaissance in the 15th century, the other great Italian power centres of Milan, Rome, and Venice also fostered artistic and architectural achievement. In Venice, the **Doge's Palace**, which had been evolving since its origins in the 9th century, embodied many of the architectural highpoints of the previous six centuries. The current building began to take shape around 1340; work on the side overlooking the Piazzetta did not begin until 1424, under doge Francesco Foscari (1373–1457).

In 1424, Timur's descendant, Ulugh Beg (1394–1449) – astronomer and future Mongol leader – built a great **observatory** in Samarkand. It was equipped with a 40m (130ft) sextant, and Ulugh and his team of scholars catalogued over a thousand stars.

The Tribute Money
Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone Masaccio died aged just 27, but created some of the most influential artworks of the Renaissance.

1426–30

Joan of Arc here leads troops into battle, wielding a crossbow.

Bodkin point
This type of arrowhead is an uncomplicated, squared, metal spike, extensively used during the wars of the Middle Ages.

THE DAUGHTER OF A FARMER, JOAN OF ARC (1412–31) was 16 when in 1429 voices in her head commanded her to bear aid to the French dauphin (see 1421–22). The English under John, duke of Bedford (1389–1435), had made further gains against the forces of the dauphin and were **besieging Orleans**, while the dauphin had still not managed to secure his coronation. Joan succeeded in

1421 Murad II becomes Ottoman sultan

1421 Czech estates form autonomous government; repel second anti-Hussite crusade

31 August 1422 Death of **Henry V** of England in France; succession of **Henry VI** (b.1387)

1422 Chinese explorer **Zheng He's** 6th voyage brings giraffes back from Africa

1421 Milan annexes Genoa; defeats Swiss

1421 Chinese imperial court moves to **Forbidden City** at Beijing

21 October 1422 Death of **Charles VI** of France (b.1368)

1422 First Ottoman siege of **Constantinople**

17 August 1424 Duke of Bedford, regent of France, defeats supporters of dauphin Charles at **Battle of Verneuil**

1424 Ulugh Beg (1394–1449), ruler of Samarkand, builds observatory

1424 Ottomans take **Smyrna**, Anatolia

1426 Hussites under **Procopius the Great** (c.1380–1434) defeat third anti-Hussite crusade

1427 Venetian forces take **Bergamo** from Milan, northern Italy

1424 Francesco Sforza succeeds his father as *condottierro* (leader) of a **mercenary company**, Milan

1424 Italian artist **Lorenzo Ghiberti** completes doors to Florence Baptistery

1424 Renovation begins on Piazzetta façade of **Doge's Palace**, Venice

1427 Portuguese discover the **Azores**, North Atlantic

1428 Le dynasty in Vietnam wins independence from China

May 1429 Joan of Arc relieves **siege of Orleans**

1431–33

1434

The Arnolfini Marriage by Jan van Eyck is noted for its detailed interior.

> **“ WE READ** THAT WE OUGHT TO **FORGIVE OUR ENEMIES;** BUT **WE DO NOT READ** THAT WE OUGHT TO **FORGIVE OUR FRIENDS. ”**
>
> **Cosimo de Medici**

Painting of the first Medici ruler of Florence, Cosimo.

obtaining an interview with him at Chinon, won him over, and was provided with troops and the title *chef de guerre* (“war leader”). She successfully relieved Orleans, going on to **defeat the English** twice more, and stood next to the dauphin at his coronation as Charles VII at Reims in 1429. Joan failed to take Paris, however, and the following year, she was **captured** by the Burgundians, who ransomed her to their English allies (see 1431–33).

In 1428, Le Loi, leader of Vietnamese resistance to the Chinese occupation, expelled the Chinese and founded the **Le dynasty of Dai Viet**. On admitting Chinese authority, his dynasty was recognized by the Ming.

FROM 1431 TO 1433, ZHENG HE (see 1404–07) made a seventh and final expedition, returning to the **Persian Gulf**. Despite this last trip, China’s period of exploration had come to an end with the death of **Emperor Yongle** in 1424, after which the **Ming dynasty** returned to its isolationist policy.

SHIP LENGTHS

22m COLUMBUS’S SHIP

134m ZHENG HE’S SHIP

Surrendering the lead in exploration to Portugal and the Europeans would have profound consequences for the Chinese, and world history.

Not all the great Renaissance painters were Italian; **Jan van Eyck** (*c.*1390–1441) was Flemish. Celebrated for his mastery of realism and his perfection of oil painting, van Eyck produced some of his greatest masterpieces in the 1430s. In 1432, he and his brother Hubert completed their largest surviving work, the altarpiece of St Bavo’s Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium. Later that year, in London, van Eyck painted the *Portrait of an Unknown Man* and the *Man with the Red Turban;* possibly a self-portrait.

In 1431, **Joan of Arc** was turned over by the English to the French ecclesiastical authorities for trial. She was found guilty of heresy, and was **burned at the stake** in Rouen.

SINCE THE 1380S, FLORENCE HAD BEEN DOMINATED by the **Albizzi** family, who extended the city’s control of Tuscany. The attempts of Visconti Milan (see 1421–22) to gain control over all of Tuscany forced Florence into a ruinously expensive war, although alliance with Venice saw **Milan defeated**. A leader of the peace party was wool merchant and banker Giovanni de Medici, possibly the richest man in Europe. After his death in 1429 and a disastrous war with Lucca in Tuscany, the Albizzi succeeded in having Giovanni’s son, Cosimo de Medici banished from Florence in 1433, but new elections saw him recalled the following year, marking the start of **Medici domination** of the city. Cosimo combined business acumen with political shrewdness, winning popular support for his policies.

All attempts by **anti-Hussite forces** under the emperor Sigismund to dislodge the Hussites and regain control of the **Czech territories** had failed (see 1416–20). The superior organization and tactics of the Hussites, first under Jan Zizka and after his death in 1424 under **Andrew Prokops**, made them militarily powerful. In 1430, they invaded Germany and raided as far as Franconia. Negotiations with the ecumenical **Council of Basel** in 1413 led to the Compact of Prague, or *Compactacta*, under which moderate Hussites (the Utraquists) agreed to go back to the Catholic Church. The extreme anti-papist Taborites rejected the Compact, and civil war broke out between the factions, which represented different classes as well as religious ideals. In 1434, at the **Battle of Lipany** the upper-class Utraquists vanquished the Taborites, killing Prokops.

The rising power of the Sukhothai kingdom of Thailand had increasingly threatened the **Khmer Empire** (see 1201–05) through the 14th century. Repeated **Thai raids**, particularly an incursion in 1431, may have helped trigger the 1434 **abandonment of Angkor** (see 1146–50) and the transfer of the Khmer capital to Phnom Penh, further south, although it is also possible that the new location offered better connections for foreign trade.

Sponsored by Prince **Henry the Navigator** (see 1416–20), Portuguese explorers pushing out into the Atlantic had discovered the islands of **Madeira** and the **Azores**. Henry personally oversaw the colonization of these Atlantic outposts, successfully establishing them as centres of agricultural production and forward bases for **Portuguese exploration**. Henry’s next target was to round Cape Bojador on the coast of West Africa, the furthest limit of Portuguese exploration; contemporary European sailors’ lore viewed the seas beyond as a dangerous and terrifying otherworld. **Cape Bojador** was finally rounded by Gil Eannes in 1434. The experiences of his sailors on these voyages of discovery convinced Henry that the traditional barca ships in use were unsuitable, and he worked with shipwrights to design a new type of vessel, **the caravel**. This was smaller, lighter, and swifter, with a shallow draft for near-shore operations and more space for stores to allow the ships to stay at sea for longer.

The Windrose
The Windrose mosaic at Sagres in Portugal – possibly a sundial – was commissioned by Portuguese navigator, Prince Henry.

17 July 1429 Coronation of dauphin as **Charles VII** of France

1430 Ottomans take **Salonika** in Greece from Venice, demonstrating their naval power

23 May 1430 Capture of **Joan of Arc** by the Burgundians

c.1430 Full plate armour introduced for European knights

30 May 1431 **Joan of Arc** burned at stake (b.1412)

1431 Khmer capital moved from **Angkor** after Thai raid, Southeast Asia

1432 Flemish artist **Jan van Eyck** completes the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*

1433 Tuaregs conquer **Timbuktu**, Mali Empire

1433 Compacts of Prague end Hussite wars

1433 Zheng He’s last voyage and subsequent **isolation of China**

30 May Taborites defeated by Utraquist–Catholic alliance at **Battle of Lipany** where **Procopius** is killed (born *c.*1380)

Cosimo de Medici (1389–1464) begins Medici dominance in Florence

1 June Death of **Wladyslaw II Jagiello** (born *c.*1362), Grand Duke of Lithuania and king of Poland

Aztec Triple Alliance with Texcoco and Tiacopan, Central America

Khmer capital moves to **Phnom Penh**, Southeast Asia

Zara Ya’qub (1399–1468) becomes king of **Ethiopia**

Portuguese explorers round **Cape Bojador**, West Africa

1435–37

This manuscript illustration shows Charles VII entering Paris in triumph.

> “THE **KINGDOM OF FRANCE...** WILL BE THUS **RULED BY** KING **CHARLES VII...** HE WILL ENTER PARIS IN GOOD COMPANY.”
>
> **Joan of Arc, Christian visionary**

THOUGH ALLIED WITH THE ENGLISH OCCUPATION OF FRANCE, the Burgundians (see 1404–07) were increasingly concerned at English gains. With the **Treaty of Arras**, the Burgundians and the French king, Charles VII, made peace but the English, unwilling to accept the terms, withdrew from negotiations. The following year, the French alliance took Paris from English control.

The 1430s saw increasing **tension** between the **papacy** and the **conciliar movement**, which held that the Church ought to be governed by a Church council, rather than an individual pope. Pope Eugenius IV summoned a **General Council at Basel** in 1431, but it was dominated by **anti-papal sentiment** and, in 1437, he tried to transfer the Council to Ferrara, where it would be more amenable to his influence. Most of the delegates refused to leave Basel, resulting in **two concurrent councils**.

1438–40

Founded by King Henry VI of England, construction of Eton college was halted when the king was deposed during the War of the Roses.

IN 1438, PACHACUTEC (C.1438–1472) BECAME THE NINTH INCA KING, or *Sapa Inca*. His reign heralded the beginning of a great expansion of the Inca realm, which had been confined to the immediate area around **Cuzco** since its foundation (see 1201–1205). It began with invasion by the rival Chancas, who besieged Cuzco, and were completely defeated. **Inca expansion** was facilitated by the sophisticated nature of most of the kingdoms and tribes they conquered; tight-knit, centralized administration focused on the emperor; a genius for organization and record-keeping (despite having no writing); and an imperial road-building programme rivalled only by the Roman Empire.

In 1440, the young king of England founded a new college at Eton. The King's College of Our Lady of Eton near Windsor, now known as **Eton College**, was intended to be part of a large foundation including a massive church, an almshouse, and 70 scholars who were to receive free education before going on to King's College, Cambridge.

With the **Ottomans** (see 1286–90) occupying territories on all sides of the tiny **remnants of the Byzantine Empire**, and threatening Constantinople itself, the embattled Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus (see 1448–49) arrived in Europe to plead for help from the **Council of Ferrara** in 1438.

KEY

- Expansion by 1400
- Expansion in the reign of Pachacutec

Inca expansion
The Inca Empire had expanded greatly between 1400 and the end of Pachacutec's reign. It would triple in size by the 16th century.

Gold llama statuette
The Inca were so rich in gold that emperor Atahualpa was able to offer a ransom of 750 tonnes of it when captured by conquistadors in 1532.

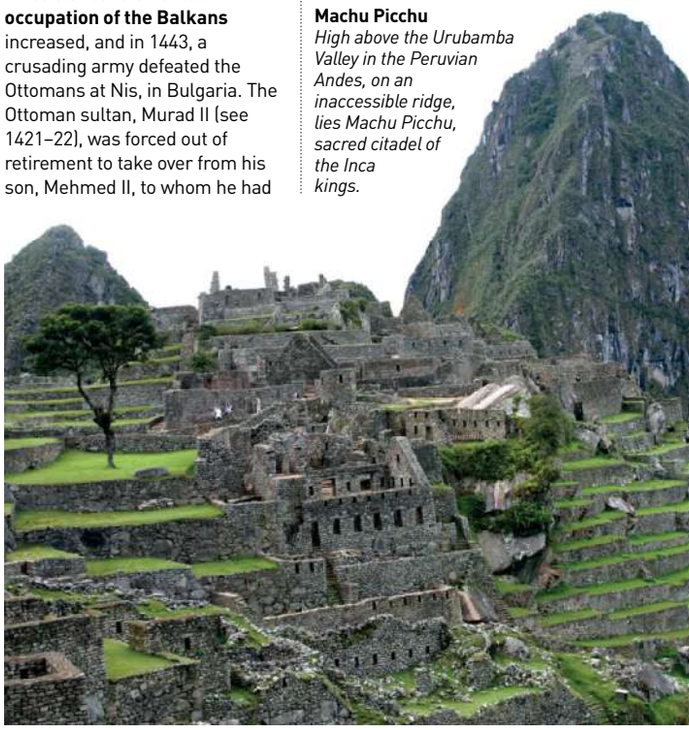
1441–44

Fresco by Domenico di Bartolo, (c.1410-1461), of the Sienese school, from Siena's hospital of Santa Maria della Scala.

MACHU PICCHU (meaning "Old Peak" in Quechua, the language of the Incas) is a mountaintop citadel about 70km (43 miles) northwest of Cuzco. Construction probably began in the 1440s, under the auspices of **Pachacutec**. The maximum population of Machu Picchu was possibly only around 1,000, and it is thought that it served as a ceremonial centre, as well as being an impregnable stronghold for the Inca elite in case of attack.

Resistance to **Ottoman occupation of the Balkans** increased, and in 1443, a crusading army defeated the Ottomans at Nis, in Bulgaria. The Ottoman sultan, Murad II (see 1421–22), was forced out of retirement to take over from his son, Mehmed II, to whom he had attempted to entrust his crown. At Adrianople, Murad made a 10-year truce with Albanian military leader Hunyadi Skandebeg and other resistors of Ottoman advance. However, with the pope **preaching crusade**, the resistors were absolved of their oaths of peace and they launched a new attack. Led by Hunyadi and Wladyslaw III of Poland and Hungary (1424–1444), the crusading army – the last major

Machu Picchu
High above the Urubamba Valley in the Peruvian Andes, on an inaccessible ridge, lies Machu Picchu, sacred citadel of the Inca kings.



1435 Treaty of Arras; alliance of Burgundians with Charles VII of France against English

1436 Completion of Italian architect **Filippo Brunelleschi's** Duomo, Florence

9 December 1437 Death of Emperor **Sigismund** (b.1368)

1437 Civil war in **Scotland**

1437 Moors retake **Ceuta**, North Africa

1438 Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus arrives at **Council of Ferrara** to seek help against Ottomans

1438 Expansion of Inca Empire begins under **Sapa Inca Pachacutec**

1438 Francesco Sforza acting for Venice defeats Milanese mercenaries

1439 Ottoman sultan **Murad II** (1404–51) begins conquest of Serbia

1439 Council of Basel deposes Pope Eugene IV; elects anti-pope Felix V

1439 Oba Ewuare takes power in Benin Empire, West Africa

1440 Henry VI founds **Eton College**, England

1440 Moctezuma I (c.1398–1469) becomes Aztec emperor and expands dominion

c.1440s Construction of **Machu Picchu**, Inca Empire, begins

1441 Francesco Sforza negotiates **Treaty of Cavriana** between Venice and Milan

1441 Mayan city of **Mayapán** destroyed in revolt, Central America

1442 Death of **Alexander I the Great** (b.1386), who reunited Georgia

1445–47

The rocky north coast between Paul and Ribeira Grande in Santa Antao in the Cape Verde islands.

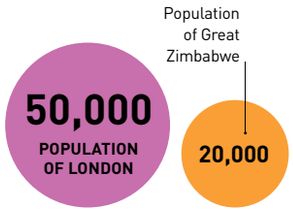
2:1 **Battle of Varna**
The Hungarian-led crusader army, with a strength of 30,000, suffered heavy losses at the hands of the Ottoman troops, who numbered 60,000.

HENRY THE NAVIGATOR'S EXPENSIVE PROJECT to open up the coast of Africa (see 1434) was met with scepticism at home in Portugal, until in 1441, one of his ships returned with **gold dust and slaves**, prompting an acceleration of activity. Between 1444 and 1446, around 35 of Henry's vessels sailed for the **West African coast**. In 1445, sailing in one of Henry's new caravels, explorer **Dinis Dias** sighted the mouth of the Senegal River, which offered a trade route deep into the African interior, and rounded **Cape Verde**, the westernmost point of Africa. Dias returned the following year as part of a fleet of caravels intending to plant the Portuguese flag and explore what Henry believed might be the western branch of the Nile, while another of Henry's captains, Nuño Tristão, sighted the Gambia River.

The marriage of **Margaret of Anjou** (*c.*1430–82) to Henry VI of England in 1445 was negotiated by William de la Pole, chief advisor to the king and power behind the throne, whose aim was to stop the war in France (see 1435–37). At first, the match and the bride were popular in England, but in 1448, the territory of Maine in northern France was lost to Charles VII and the queen was blamed for her influence over the weak king. Margaret would survive this, however, and become an important player in the **Wars of the Roses** (see 1454–55).

The death of **Filippo Maria Visconti** in 1447 signalled the end of the Visconti ducal line of Milan (see 1421–22). There were multiple claimants to the ducal throne, and eager to avoid domination by a foreigner, the Milanese powers immediately constituted the *Aurea Repubblica Ambrosiana* of Milan, or the **Ambrosian Republic**, but they faced insurmountable obstacles. Riven by internal dissension and unwilling to lose control of the other cities controlled by Milan, they were soon forced to turn military control over to a *condotierre*, or mercenary soldier-leader - the powerful Muzio Attendolo, nicknamed *Sforza* meaning "exert" or "force".

In the mid-15th century, the Shona kingdom of **Mwene Mutapa**, also known as Great Zimbabwe (see 1106–10), was nearing the end of its glory days. By this time, the riches of the gold fields had funded construction of the Great Enclosure, an elliptical space enclosed by a giant wall 244m (800ft) around, and up to 11m (36ft) high in places, built from almost a million granite blocks.



Golden age of Great Zimbabwe
In the mid-15th century, the population of Great Zimbabwe was just under half the size of the population of London.

1448–49

Illustration from a Muromachi period manuscript, the arts flourished in Japan under Ashikaga patronage.

IN 1449, ASHIKAGA YOSHIMASA (1435–90) BECAME SHOGUN, or military dictator, of Japan. Although his reign marked a cultural highpoint of the Ashikaga, or Muromachi period (1336–1573) it was also a period of increasing civil strife. Repeated famines triggered constant uprisings, while the Ashikaga practice of issuing *tokuseirei* or "acts of grace" to cancel debts, damaged the economy. Despite this, Yoshimasa presided over a cultural flowering at his Higashiyama estate.

The new pope, Nicholas V, elected in 1447, was intent on bringing an end to the schism caused by his predecessor's clash with the **Council of Basel** (see 1435–37), and on restoring peace to Italy and achieving harmonious relations with other rulers. At the **Concordat of Vienna** in 1448, he made concessions to Emperor Frederick III and the other German princes, who in return abandoned the Council of Basel and recognized some papal powers. The following year, the Council of Basel finally disbanded and the anti-pope, Felix V, abdicated in return for a cardinalship. This marked the final **victory of the papacy** over the conciliar movement.

Following the death of Byzantine emperor John VIII, his brother Constantine XI Palaeologus (see panel, right) acceded to the throne in Constantinople – he would be the **last Byzantine emperor**. The Ottomans had defeated another of Jan Hunyadi's crusades to clear them from the Balkans at the second Battle of Kosovo in 1448, regaining control of Albania. It was clear that there would be no European rescue for the embattled Byzantines. The Ottomans were closing in on Constantinople.

PALAEOLOGUS
(1404–53)

Constantine XI Palaeologus succeeded to the remnants of a once-great empire, left without the resources to defend itself. He was the last emperor of Byzantium, a state that had lasted throughout the medieval period, providing a unique bridge between east and west, ancient and modern. He died on the walls of Constantinople, having done everything in his power to secure its defence.

1443 **Alfonso of Aragon** (1396–1458) crowned king of Naples

1443 **Skanderbeg** (1405–1468) leads Albanian revolt against the Ottomans

10 November 1444 Ottoman sultan Murad II repels Hungarian-led crusading army at **Battle of Varna**

23 April 1445 Marriage of **Margaret of Anjou** to Henry VI of England

1445 Portuguese explorer **Dinis Dias** rounds Cape Verde, West Africa

1445 **Zara Ya'qub** of Ethiopia (1399–1468) defeats sultanate of Ifat and kills sultan of Adal, Somalia

c.1445 Last golden age of **Great Zimbabwe**

1446 Death of **Deva Raya II** (b.1424) who had expanded Vijayanagar Empire, India, to greatest extent

1447 **Casimir IV** (1427–92) reunites Lithuania and Poland

1447 **Ambrosian Republic** founded in Milan

1448 Portuguese build slave-trading fort on **Arguin Island**, West Africa

1448 **Concordat of Vienna**

1448 Murad II defeats crusade of Jan Hunyadi at **Second Battle of Kosovo**

1448 German printer **Johannes Gutenberg** (*c.*1398–1468) borrows money to develop a printing press, Mainz

1449 Accession of **Constantine XI Palaeologus**, the last Byzantine emperor

1449 Ming dynasty begin rebuilding **Great Wall**, China

1449 Chinese emperor **Zhengtong** (1427–64) captured by Mongols

1449 Rule of **Ashikaga Yoshisama** (1435–90) marks height of the Muromachi period, Japan

1449 Triumph of papacy over conciliar movement with dissolution of **Council of Basel**

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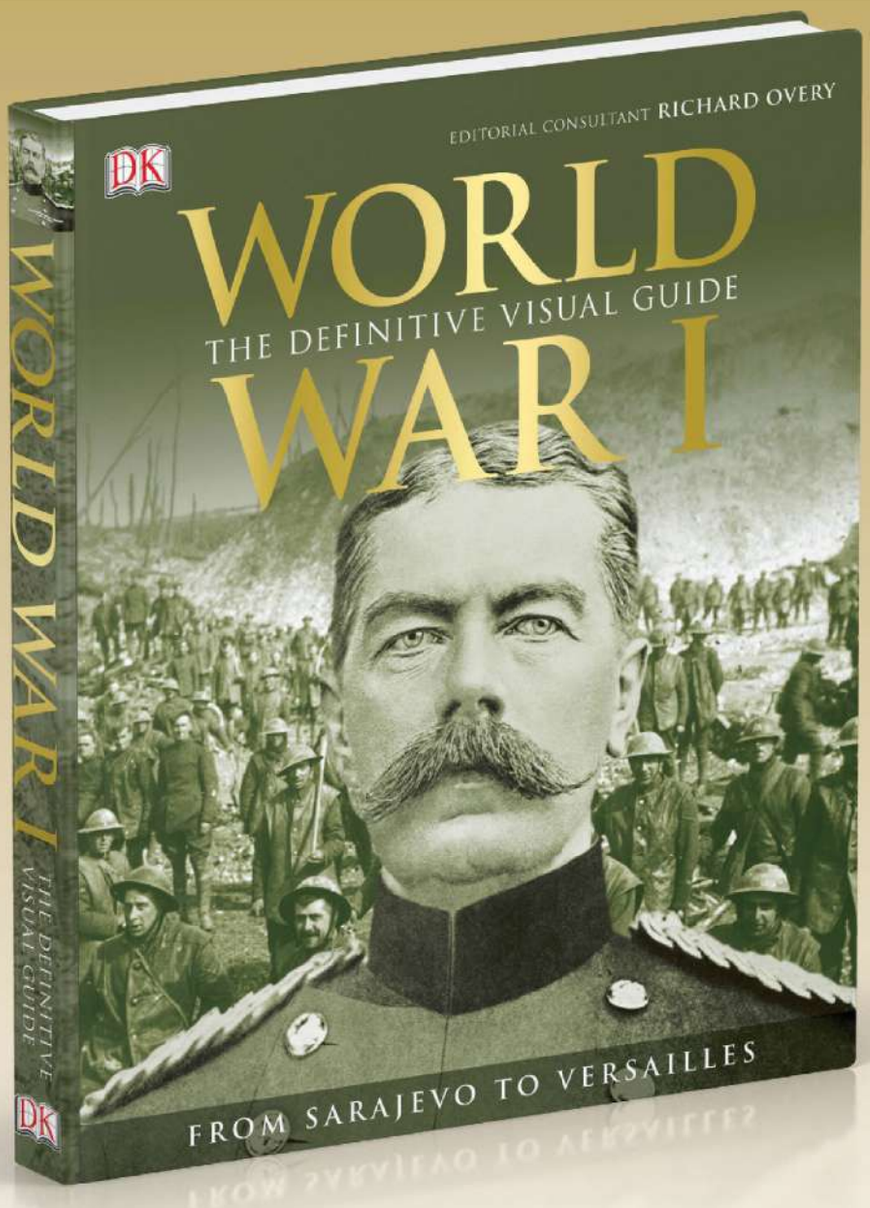

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